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# CaRDI Reports

ISSUE NUMBER 6/DECEMBER 2008

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## Rural New York State in Perspective: A Chartbook from the Empire State Poll, 2007-2008





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## **Rural New York State in Perspective: A Chartbook from the Empire State Poll, 2007-2008**

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## Introduction

In this report, we examine perceptions and opinions of New York State residents regarding a variety of current issues. The report highlights 2007 and 2008 survey data from the Empire State Poll and the Community & Rural Development Institute's (CaRDI – [www.cardi.cornell.edu](http://www.cardi.cornell.edu)) rural survey. In particular, we focus on how rural New Yorkers' perceptions and opinions compare to upstate and downstate urban respondents, and to New York State residents' in general. The topics we present cover a wide range of current issues facing New York State residents and communities.

The Empire State Poll, with the corresponding rural survey, represents a significant program focal area for CaRDI. CaRDI uses the Empire State Poll and rural surveys as a vehicle for supporting Cornell researchers interested in conducting research on rural people and communities. The surveys have also become a valuable tool in helping CaRDI connect with key stakeholder groups around the state who are interested in the policy-relevant issues addressed by the survey questions. CaRDI publishes two monthly publication series, the *Rural New York Minute*, and the *Research & Policy Brief Series* – both of which frequently highlight research based on data from the Empire State Poll and rural surveys. To view all of CaRDI's publications, including an electronic version of this report, please visit our website and click on the "publications" link.

## What are the Empire State Poll and Rural Surveys?

The Empire State Poll is an annual telephone survey conducted by Cornell University's Survey Research Institute (<http://sri.cornell.edu>) in February of each year. The survey interviews 800 New York State residents, 400 upstate, and 400 downstate, on a broad range of topics and issues. In addition, CaRDI commissions a similarly constructed survey which interviews 300 *rural* residents of New York State. These 300 interviews, when combined with the interviews from the original ESP survey, allow researchers to more reliably evaluate responses of rural New Yorkers.

All interviews are conducted using a Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) software system. The survey sample for the original 800 ESP interviews consists of randomly selected households within New York State. The sample selection procedures ensure that every household within New York State has an equal chance to be included in the survey. With 800 respondents, in no more than one time in twenty (representing a 95 percent confidence interval) should chance variations in the sample cause the overall ESP results to vary by more than 3.5 percentage

points from the answers that would be obtained if all New York State residents were interviewed. Furthermore, the sampling frame is proportionally split between Upstate and Downstate residents, allowing comparisons between the overall state and these geographic regions with a one in twenty chance of sampling error greater than 4.9 percentage points.

The survey sample for the 300 additional rural interviews (the survey commissioned by CaRDI) consists of randomly selected households within New York State living in rural areas. Rural areas for the purposes of this sample were defined as census tracts with a population density of less than 500 persons per square mile. The rural survey has a general confidence interval of plus or minus 5.66% (at the 95% confidence level).

All observations in the data set have been properly weighted to allow us to present general results for the state as a whole.

## How is the report organized?

The purpose of this chartbook is to give the reader a glimpse into varying perceptions and opinions of New Yorkers across the state. We do not attempt to interpret any differences we see between geographical categories, nor do we try to explain any trends that may have occurred between the two survey years. We limit our supporting text to a brief description of the main findings of each table and graph. Many of our CaRDI publications highlight data from the Empire State Poll and rural surveys, and in those topic-based publications there is more detailed analysis and interpretation of these issues.

For each graph and table we present data in percent format. We provide data for the average New York State respondent (1,100 cases in both 2007 and 2008), downstate urban respondents (N=394 in 2007, N=396 in 2008), upstate urban respondents (N=250 in 2007, N=237 in 2008), and rural respondents (N=456 in 2007, N=467 in 2008). In many cases the responses will not up to exactly 100% due to rounding error, or the exclusion of response categories such as "do not know", "refused to respond", etc. In these cases, the percentage of respondents who answered was minimal.

The first section of the report provides the demographics of the survey respondents. The survey questions are fully written out at the top of each page. In addition, the variable name from the data set is provided in parentheses following the question. The data we present in this report comes from surveys conducted in 2007 and 2008. In many cases the same question was asked in both years and we present data for both 2007 and 2008 in separate tables and graphs. In some cases survey questions were only asked in one of the

two years, and we present the data for the corresponding year. In some cases the data may be available for both 2007 and 2008, but the response categories differ slightly, so direct comparison is not always possible from one year to another. However, in those cases we do present the data for both years so that the reader can get a general sense of potential trends.

In several cases, Cornell researchers submitted “omnibus” questions on topics of special interest to their research to both the original ESP survey and CaRDI’s rural survey. In those cases, we note the researchers’ name(s) and any CaRDI publications that might be related to the presented data.

For questions or comments regarding this report, please contact Robin M. Blakely at the Community & Rural Development Institute at [rmb18@cornell.edu](mailto:rmb18@cornell.edu).

For more information on the Empire State Poll, poll objectives, sampling design, etc, please refer to the Survey Research Institute’s website at [sri.cornell.edu](http://sri.cornell.edu).

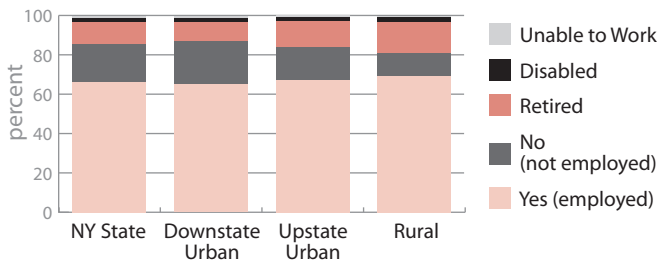


# Demographics of Survey Respondents

## Question:

Last week, did you do any work for either pay or profit? Include any job from which you were temporarily “absent” or “on layoff.” (employ)

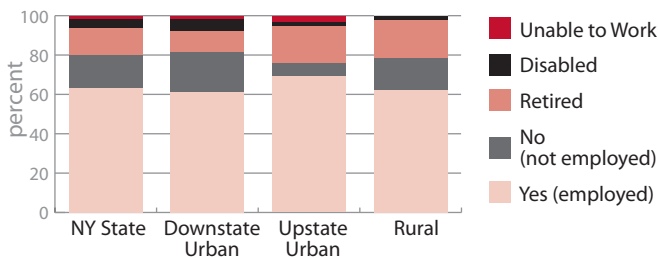
**Figure 1A: Employment status (as of last week), 2007**



**Table 1A: Employment Status (as of last week), 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Yes (employed)	66.3%	65.0%	67.2%	69.3%
No (not employed)	19.1	22.1	16.4	11.4
Retired	11.2	9.6	13.6	15.8
Disabled	2.0	1.8	2.0	2.4
Unable to work	1.2	1.3	0.8	0.9

**Figure 1B: Employment status (as of last week), 2008**



**Table 1B: Employment Status (as of last week), 2008**

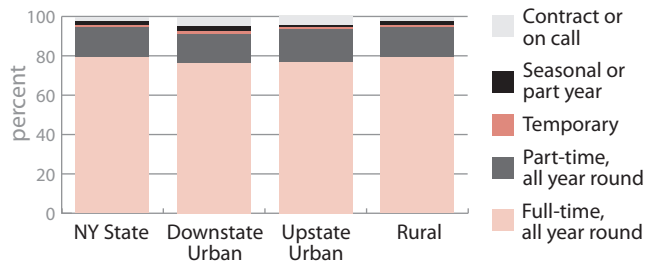
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Yes (employed)	63.2%	61.4%	69.1%	62.2%
No (not employed)	16.3	19.9	6.8	15.9
Retired	14.2	11.1	18.6	19.4
Disabled	4.3	5.6	2.5	2.4
Unable to work	1.9	2.0	3.0	0.2

Across all groups, nearly two-thirds of respondents said they were employed in both 2007 and 2008, with small differences in 2007 (65 percent downstate urban, 67.2 percent upstate urban and 69.3 percent rural) and slightly larger differences in 2008 (61.4 percent downstate urban, 69.1 percent upstate urban and 62.2 percent rural). Rural respondents were more likely to be retired than other groups (15.8 percent in 2007 and 19.4 percent in 2008), while downstate urban respondents were more likely to be unemployed (22.1 percent in 2007 and 19.9 percent in 2008).

## Question:

Which of the following best describes your main job? (by main job we mean the one at which you usually work the most hours) (jbtype)

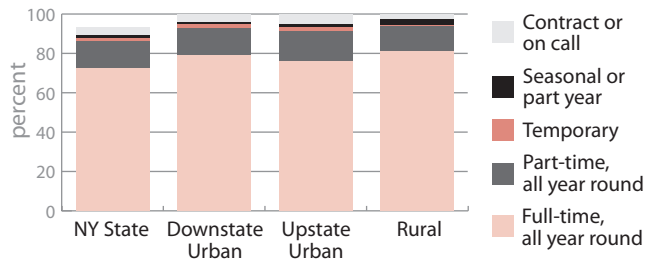
**Figure 2A: Main job type (employed only), 2007**



**Table 2A: Main Job Type (employed only), 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Full-time, all year round	79.2%	76.4%	76.8%	79.2%
Part-time, all year round	15.5	14.3	16.7	15.5
Temporary	0.6	1.9	1.2	0.6
Seasonal or part year	2.5	2.3	0.6	2.5
Contract or on call	1.9	4.7	4.8	1.9

**Figure 2B: Main job type (employed only), 2008**



**Table 2B: Main Job Type (employed only), 2008**

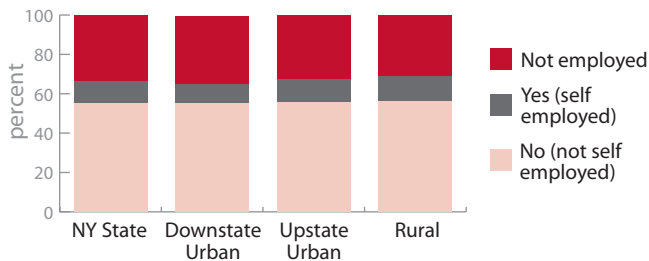
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Full-time, all year round	72.5%	79.0%	76.1%	81.1%
Part-time, all year round	13.6	13.6	15.3	12.8
Temporary	1.9	2.5	1.8	0.5
Seasonal or part year	1.5	0.8	1.8	2.9
Contract or on call	3.9	4.1	4.9	2.7

Across all groups, most respondents who reported being employed in 2007 and 2008 were working in full-time jobs, with only small percentage differences across groups. In 2008, 81.1 percent of rural respondents reported working full-time, as did 79 percent of downstate urban and 76.1 percent of upstate urban respondents. Between 12-17 percent of workers said they worked part-time jobs, with upstate urban respondents slightly more likely to work part-time (15.3 percent of upstate urban respondents in 2008, compared to 13.6 of downstate urban and 12.8 percent of rural workers). Of the other options, between 4 and 5 percent of downstate and upstate urban respondents were contract workers on call in both years.

## Question:

Are you self-employed without employees (i.e., consultant, freelancer) on your main job? (slfempl)

**Figure 3: Self employed (those who are employed), 2007**



**Table 3A: Self employed (those who are employed), 2007**

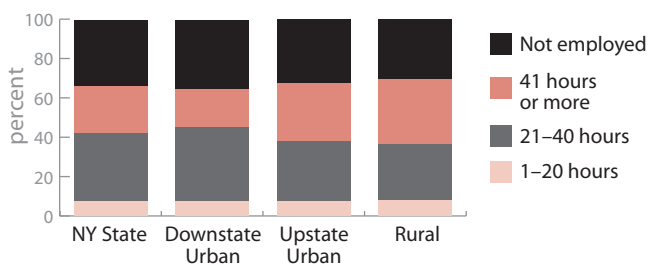
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No (not self employed)	55.2%	55.1%	55.6%	56.4%
Yes (self employed)	11.1	9.6	11.6	12.7
Do not know	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
Not employed	33.6	35.0	32.8	30.5

Rural respondents were more likely to be self-employed in 2007 than respondents in other geographic areas. (12.7 percent, compared to 11.6 percent of upstate urban and 9.6 percent of downstate urban respondents, respectively).

## Question:

How many hours did you work last week, at all jobs? (hrswork)

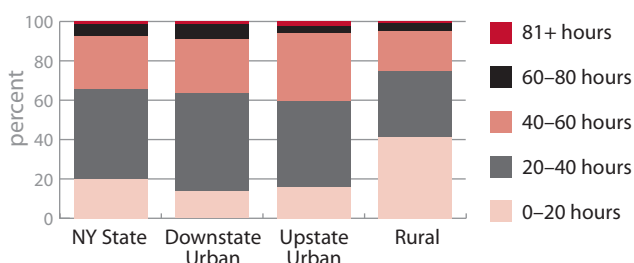
**Figure 4A: Hours worked (per week), 2007**



**Table 4A: Hours worked (per week), 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
1-20 hours	7.5%	7.6%	7.6%	8.1%
21-40 hours	34.4	37.3	30.0	28.1
41 hours or more	24.2	19.8	29.6	33.1
Do not know	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0
Not employed	33.5	34.8	32.8	30.5

**Figure 4B: Hours worked (per week), 2008**



**Table 4B: Hours worked (per week), 2008**

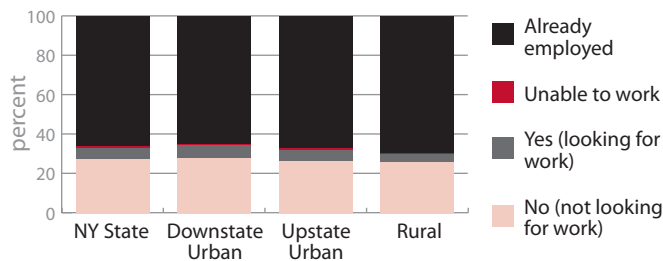
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0-20 hours	20.0%	13.6%	16.0%	41.3%
20-40 hours	45.7	50.2	43.6	33.3
40-60 hours	26.9	27.2	34.4	20.4
60-80 hours	6.1	7.8	3.7	4.4
81+ hours	1.4	1.2	2.5	0.7

Upstate urban respondents were more likely to work more than 40 hours a week in 2008, with 40.6 percent reporting they worked more than 40 hours in 2008, compared to 33.2 percent of downstate urban and 25.5 percent of rural respondents. In 2007, more rural respondents reported working more than 40 hours, with 33.1 percent of rural respondents, 29.6 percent of upstate urban and 19.8 percent of downstate urban. In 2008, downstate urban and upstate urban respondents most commonly worked 20-40 hours a week (50.2 percent for downstate urban, 43.6 percent for upstate urban), while 41.3 percent of rural respondents reported working 0-20 hours a week and only 33.3 percent reported working 20-40 hours. In 2007, those numbers were substantially different for rural respondents, as only 8.1 percent reported working 1-20 hours a week. The reason that the 2008 figures for working 0-20 hours per week are so much larger than the 2007 figures for working 1-20 hours is that the 2008 figure includes those not employed (i.e., working 0 hours per week).

## Question:

In the last four weeks have you looked for new work or a new job? (lkwork)

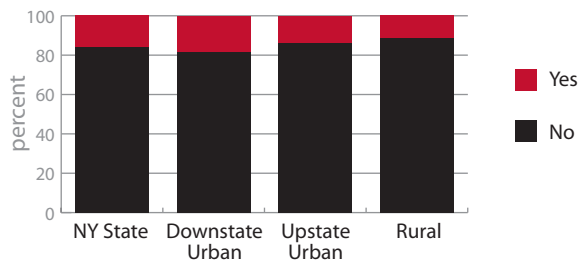
**Figure 5A: Looking for work, 2007**



**Table 5A: Looking for work, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No (not looking for work)	27.0%	27.7%	26.0%	25.9%
Yes (looking for work)	5.8	6.3	6.0	3.7
Unable to work	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.9
Already employed	66.4	65.2	67.2	69.5
Not employed	33.5	34.8	32.8	30.5

**Figure 5B: Looking for work (those who are not employed), 2008**



**Table 5B: Looking for work (those who are not employed), 2008**

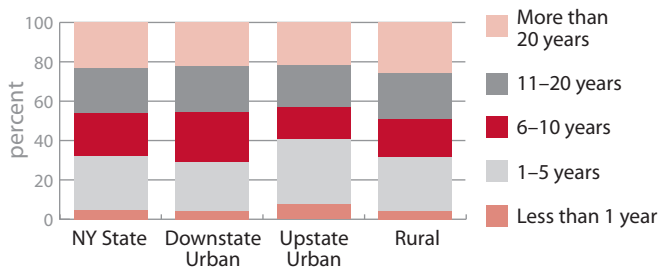
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No (not looking for work)	84.1%	81.8%	85.9%	88.8%
Yes (looking for work)	15.9	18.2	14.1	11.2

Among all groups, more respondents reported in 2008 that they had looked for new work than in 2007, but that is because the question was worded differently in the two consecutive years. In 2007, respondents answered the question even if they were already employed (and thus not looking for work), whereas in 2008 only those who were not employed were able to answer the question. In 2008, of those who were not currently employed, downstate urban respondents were most likely to be looking for work, (18.2 percent) followed by upstate urban respondents at 14.1 percent and rural respondents (11.2 percent).

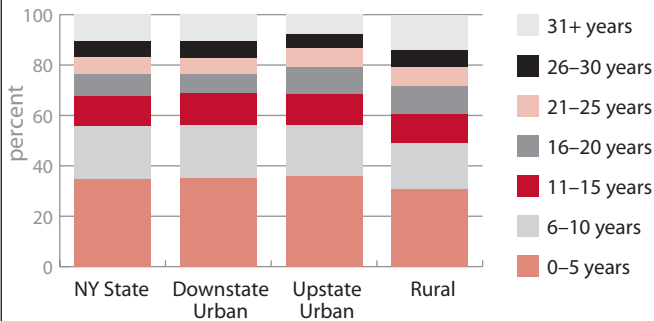


**Question:**

How long have you lived at your current residence? (Ivdres)

**Figure 6A:** Number of years living in current residence, 2007**Table 6A:** Number of years living in current residence, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
less than 1 year	4.7%	4.1%	7.6%	4.2%
1 - 5 years	27.2	24.9	33.2	27.4
6 - 10 years	22.3	25.4	16.0	19.1
11 - 20 years	22.8	23.1	21.6	23.7
more than 20 years	22.9	22.6	21.6	25.7

**Figure 6B:** Number of years living in current residence, 2008**Table 6B:** Number of years living in current residence, 2008

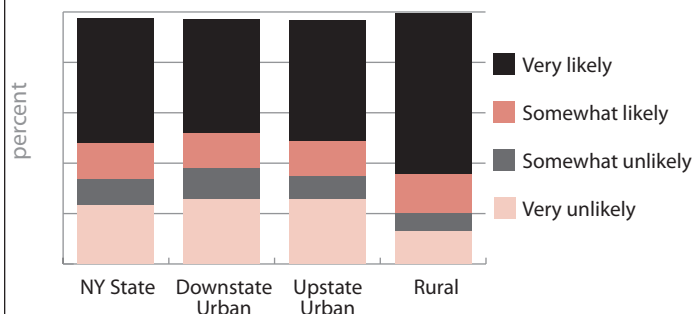
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0-5 years	34.8%	35.4%	35.9%	30.6%
6-10 years	20.7	21.0	20.3	18.5
11-15 years	12.0	12.4	12.2	11.2
16-20 years	9.0	7.8	11.0	11.4
21-25 years	6.4	6.1	7.2	7.3
26-30 years	6.6	6.8	5.9	6.9
31+ years	10.5	10.6	7.6	14.0

In 2008, about a third of all respondents reported living at their current residence for between 0-5 years (35.9 percent of upstate urban, 35.4 percent of downstate urban and 30.6 percent of rural) in 2008. Those percentages were slightly lower than 2007 numbers, which were 40.8 percent for upstate urban and 31.6 percent for rural, but higher than downstate urban respondents (29 percent), when adding the figures for “less than one year” and “1-5 years” together to be comparable to the 2008 category of “0-5 years”. Rural respondents were more likely to have lived in their current residence more than 30 years in 2008 (14 percent of rural, versus 10.6 percent of downstate urban and 7.6 percent of upstate urban.)

## Question:

How likely is it that you will be living in your current residence five years from now? If unlikely to stay, why will you leave? (mvres)

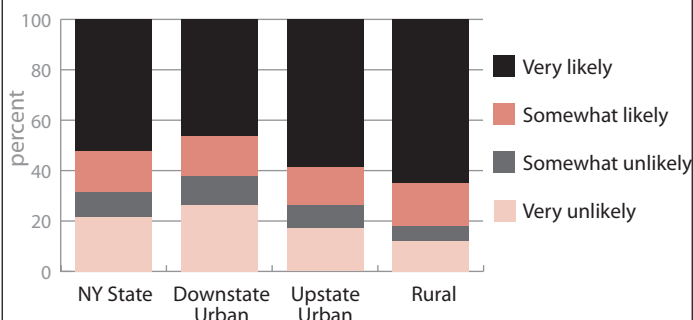
**Figure 7A:** Likelihood of being in the same residence in the next 5 years, 2007



**Table 7A:** Likelihood of being in the same residence in the next 5 years, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very unlikely	23.2%	25.6%	25.6%	12.7%
Somewhat unlikely	10.8	12.4	9.2	7.2
Somewhat likely	14.1	14.0	14.0	15.8
Very likely	49.5	45.2	48.0	63.6

**Figure 7B:** Likelihood of being in the same residence in the next 5 years, 2008



**Table 7B:** Likelihood of being in the same residence in the next 5 years, 2008

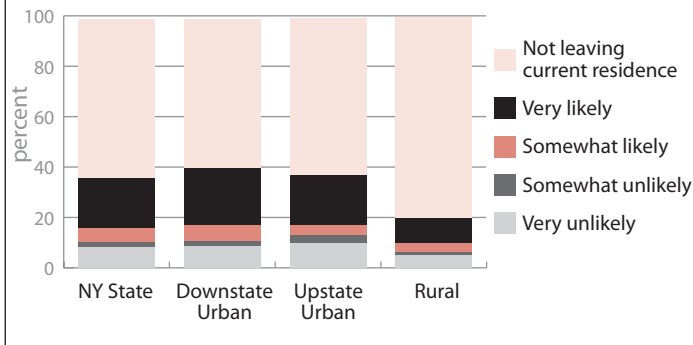
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very unlikely	21.7%	26.4%	17.0%	12.1%
Somewhat unlikely	9.8	11.3	9.4	5.6
Somewhat likely	16.1	16.0	14.9	17.3
Very likely	52.4	46.3	58.7	65.0

In both 2007 and 2008, rural respondents were most likely to indicate they would live in the same residence in the next five years (65 percent in 2008 and 63.6 percent in 2007). Upstate urban and downstate urban respondents also thought it “very likely” that they would stay in the same residence, but in smaller percentages (58.7 percent of upstate urban and 46.3 percent of downstate urban in 2008 and 48 percent of upstate urban and 45.2 percent of downstate urban in 2007). In 2007, more than one-fourth of upstate and downstate urban respondents felt it was “very unlikely” they would be at the same address in five years (25.6 percent of both downstate and upstate urban respondents). Those numbers changed for upstate urban respondents between 2007 and 2008 (to 17 percent from 25.6 percent in 2007), but remained similar for downstate urban respondents. Relatively few rural respondents felt it “very unlikely” they would be at a different address in five years (12.7 percent in 2007 and 12.1 percent in 2008).

## Question:

If you leave your current residence, how likely are you to stay in New York State? (stynys)

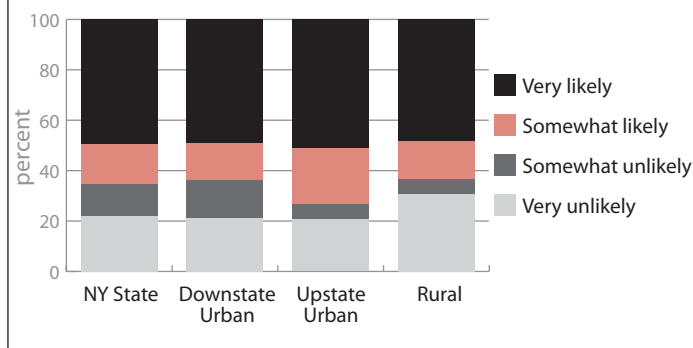
**Figure 8A:** Likelihood of staying in New York State, 2007



**Table 8A:** Likelihood of staying in New York State, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very unlikely	8.0%	8.4%	9.6%	5.0%
Somewhat unlikely	2.3	2.3	3.2	1.3
Somewhat likely	5.4	6.3	4.0	3.3
Very likely	19.8	22.6	20.0	10.3
Not leaving current residence	63.4	59.1	62.0	79.6

**Figure 8B:** Likelihood of staying in New York State (if leaving current residence in next 5 years), 2008



**Table 8B:** Likelihood of staying in New York State (if leaving current residence in next 5 years), 2008

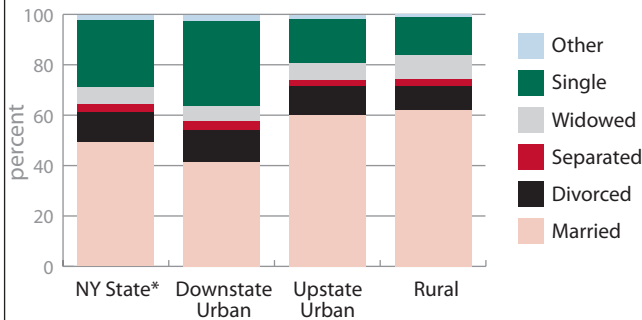
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very unlikely	17.2%	21.3%	20.6%	82.5%
Somewhat unlikely	9.6	14.7	6.3	1.5
Somewhat likely	12.5	14.7	22.2	3.9
Very likely	38.5	49.3	50.8	12.2

Between 2007 and 2008 the wording of this question changed slightly, making direct comparison of the tables difficult. In 2007, responses included those who indicated they would not leave their current residence. In 2008, only those respondents who indicated that they would leave their current residence were then permitted to answer this question. In 2008, most downstate and upstate urban respondents reported that it was likely or very likely that they would stay in the state even if they moved from their current residence in the next five years, but rural respondents overwhelmingly said they would not remain in the state if they moved from their current home (50.8 percent of upstate urban and 49.3 percent of downstate urban respondents reported it very likely they would stay in the state, while 82.5 percent of rural respondents reported it very unlikely they would stay). In 2007, the results were more standard across all geographic groups, with 22.6 percent of downstate urban respondents saying it was very likely they would stay in the state, compared to 20 percent of upstate urban respondents and 10.3 percent of rural respondents. And only 5 percent of rural respondents reported it very unlikely they would stay in the state, in 2007.

## Question:

Are you married, divorced, separated, widowed, or single? (married)

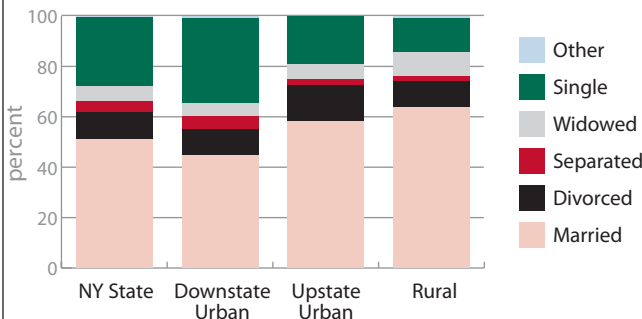
**Figure 9A: Marital status, 2007**



**Table 9A: Marital status, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Married	49.2%	41.4%	60.0%	62.1%
Divorced	12.0	12.7	11.6	9.4
Separated	3.0	3.6	2.0	2.6
Widowed	6.8	6.1	6.8	9.6
Single	26.7	33.5	17.6	15.4
Other	2.0	2.5	1.6	0.9

**Figure 9B: Marital status, 2008**



**Table 9B: Marital status, 2008**

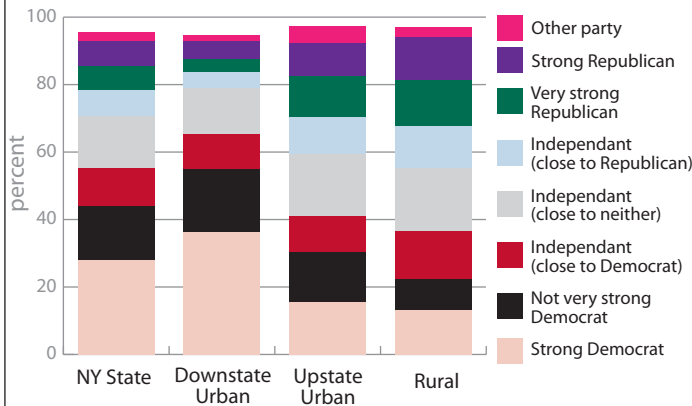
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Married	50.9%	44.6%	58.1%	63.7%
Divorced	11.1	10.4	14.4	10.5
Separated	4.1	5.3	2.5	1.9
Widowed	6.2	5.1	5.9	9.5
Single	27.1	33.9	19.1	13.5
Other	0.6	0.8	0.0	0.9

In both 2007 and 2008, rural respondents to the Empire State Poll were more likely to be married (62.1 percent in 2007, 63.7 percent in 2008) and downstate urban respondents more likely to be single (33.5 percent in 2007; 33.9 percent in 2008). Among upstate urban respondents, 58.1 percent reported being married in 2008, compared to 19.1 percent who reported being single.

## Question:

Generally speaking, when it comes to political parties in the United States, how would you best describe yourself? (party)

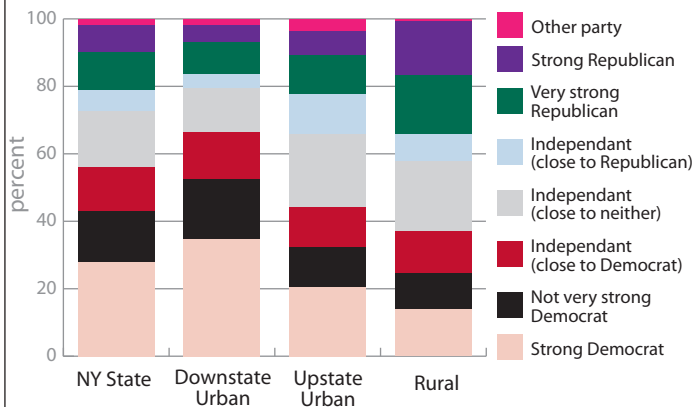
**Figure 10A: Political affiliation, 2007**



**Table 10A: Political affiliation, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strong Democrat	27.9%	36.3%	15.6%	13.2%
Not very strong Democrat	16.1	18.8	14.8	9.0
Independent (close to Democrat)	11.2	10.4	10.4	14.4
Independent (close to Neither)	15.5	13.5	18.4	18.4
Independent (close to Republican)	7.5	4.8	11.2	12.7
Not very strong Republican	7.3	4.1	12.0	13.4
Strong Republican	7.4	5.2	10.0	12.9
Other party	2.6	1.8	4.8	3.1

**Figure 10B: Political affiliation, 2008**



**Table 10B: Political affiliation, 2008**

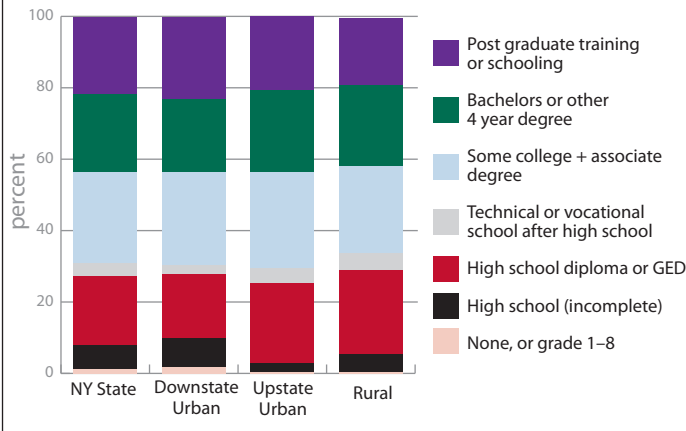
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strong Democrat	27.9%	34.8%	20.5%	13.8%
Not very strong Democrat	15.1	17.7	11.8	10.9
Independent (close to Democrat)	13.1	14.0	11.8	12.3
Independent (close to Neither)	16.5	12.9	21.8	20.8
Independent (close to Republican)	6.4	4.2	11.8	8.0
Very strong Republican	11.1	9.5	11.4	17.4
Strong Republican	7.9	5.0	7.4	16.1
Other party	2.0	1.8	3.5	0.7

More than a third of downstate urban respondents reported themselves strong Democrats, (36.3 percent in 2007 and 34.8 percent in 2008) while upstate urban and rural respondents were more broadly scattered across the political spectrum. Rural and upstate urban respondents most often described themselves as independent with no leanings to either the Democrat or Republican party. At the same time, 12.9 percent of rural respondents referred to themselves as strong Republicans in 2007 and 16.1 percent in 2008, while 13.2 percent referred to themselves as strong Democrats in 2007 and 13.8 percent in 2008. Among upstate urban respondents, Independent party members with ties to neither party were the slight majority (18.4 percent in 2007 and 21.8 percent in 2008), followed closely by strong Democrats (15.6 percent in 2007 and 20.5 percent in 2008). Only 10 percent of upstate urban respondents referred to themselves as strong Republicans in 2007, as did 7.4 percent in 2008.

## Question:

What is the last grade or class that you completed in school? (educ)

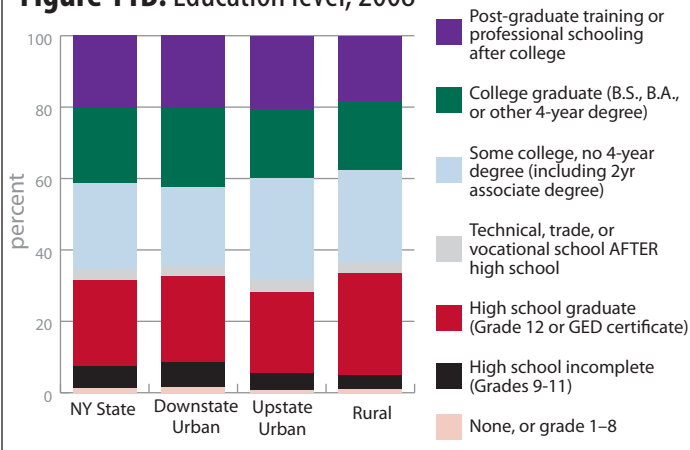
**Figure 11A: Education level, 2007**



**Table 11A: Education level, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
None, or grade 1–8	1.3%	1.8%	0.4%	0.4%
High school (incomplete)	6.5	8.1	2.4	4.8
High school diploma or GED	19.6	17.8	22.4	23.7
Technical or vocational school after high school	3.5	2.8	4.4	4.8
Some college + associate degree	25.6	25.9	26.8	24.3
Bachelor or other 4 year degree	21.9	20.6	22.8	22.6
Post graduate training or schooling	21.6	22.8	20.8	18.9

**Figure 11B: Education level, 2008**



**Table 11B: Education level, 2008**

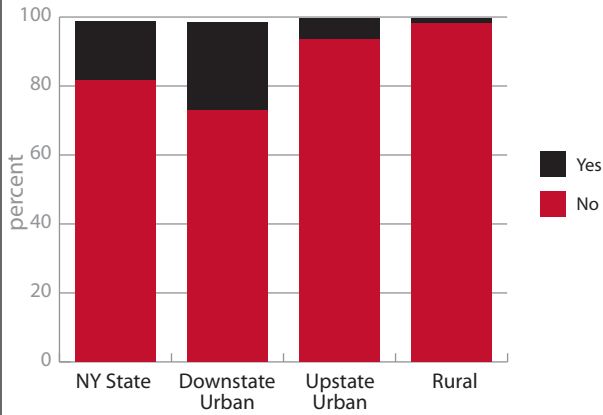
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
None, or grade 1–8	1.3%	1.5%	0.8%	1.1%
High school incomplete (Grades 9–11)	6.0	7.1	4.6	3.9
High school graduate (Grade 12 or GED certificate)	24.1	23.9	22.8	28.3
Technical, trade, or vocational school AFTER high school	3.1	3.0	3.4	3.2
Some college, no 4-year degree (including 2yr associate degree)	24.3	22.1	28.3	25.8
College graduate (B.S., B.A., or other 4-year degree)	20.9	22.1	19.4	19.5
Post-graduate training or professional schooling after college	20.3	20.3	20.7	18.2

Among all geographic respondent groups in both 2007 and 2008, about 40 percent said they had received at least a four-year college degree, with some reporting postgraduate training or schooling. Among rural respondents, 22.6 reported a four-year degree in 2007 and 19.5 percent in 2008, with 18.9 percent reporting postgraduate training in 2007 and 18.2 percent in 2008. For downstate urban respondents, 20.6 reported attaining a college degree in 2007, 22.1 in 2008, with 22.8 having postgraduate work in 2007 and 20.1 percent in 2008. 22.8 percent of upstate urban respondents reported having college degrees in 2007, as did 19.4 percent of them in 2008. 20.8 of upstate urban respondents reported completing postgraduate work in 2007, and 20.7 percent did so in 2008. Less than 2 percent of respondents in all groups reported less than an eighth grade education. However, downstate urban respondents reported the highest levels of high-school non-completion in both years (8.1 percent in 2007 and 7.1 percent in 2008). Rural respondents had the lowest levels of high school non-completion in both years (4.8 percent in 2007 and 3.9 percent in 2008).

## Question:

Are you, yourself, of Hispanic origin or descent, such as Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, or some other Spanish background? (hisp)

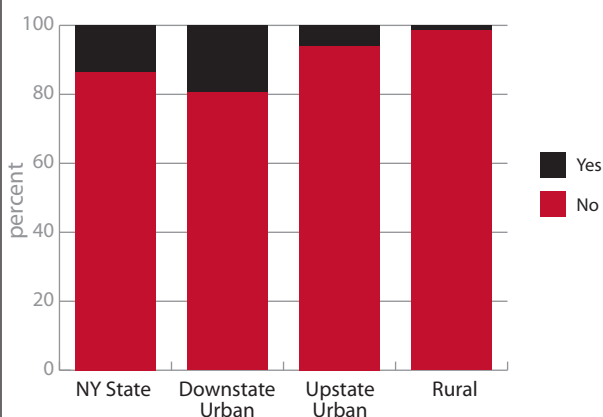
**Figure 12A: Hispanic origin or descent, 2007**



**Table 12A: Hispanic origin or descent, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No	81.7%	72.8%	93.6%	98.2%
Yes	17.3	25.6	6.0	1.5

**Figure 12B: Hispanic origin or descent, 2008**



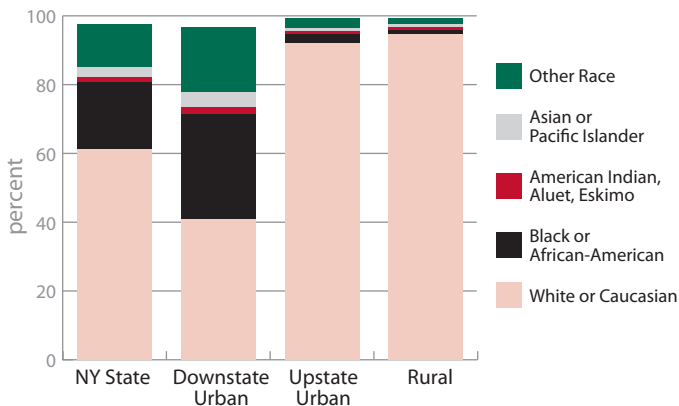
**Table 12B: Hispanic origin or descent, 2008**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No	86.5%	80.5%	94.0%	98.5%
Yes	13.5	19.5	6.0	1.5

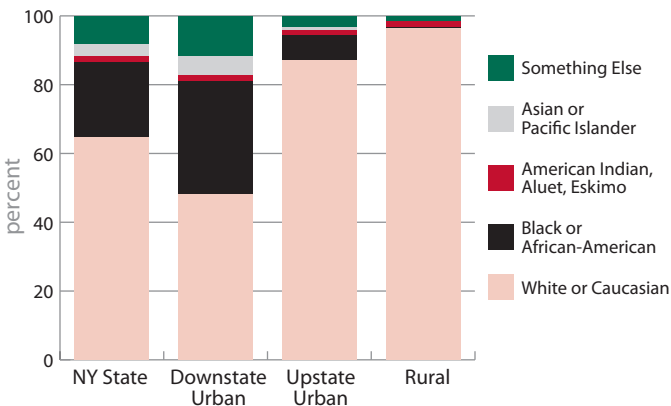
In both 2007 and 2008, more downstate urban respondents were of Hispanic origin or descent (25.6 percent in 2007, 19.5 percent in 2008) than rural (1.5 percent both years) or upstate urban respondents (6 percent both years).

**Question:**

What best describes your race? (race)

**Figure 13A: Race, 2007****Table 13A: Race, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
White or Caucasian	61.1%	40.9%	92.0%	94.7%
Black or African-American	19.5	30.5	2.8	1.1
American Indian, Aleut, Eskimo	1.7	2.3	0.8	0.9
Asian or Pacific Islander	2.9	4.3	0.8	0.7
Other race	12.5	18.8	2.8	2.0

**Figure 13B: Race, 2008****Table 13B: Race, 2008**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
White or Caucasian	64.7%	48.2%	87.1%	96.3%
Black or African-American	21.8	32.6	7.3	0.4
American Indian, Aleut, Eskimo	1.7	1.8	1.3	1.7
Asian or Pacific Islander	3.7	5.7	0.9	0.2
Something else	8.1	11.7	3.4	1.3

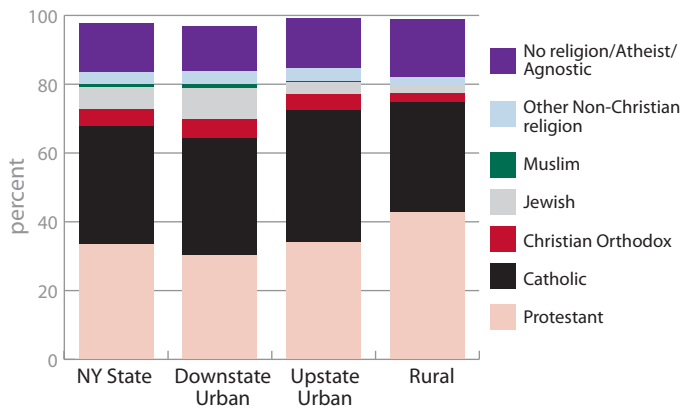
Downstate urban respondents had the most racial diversity among all geographic groups, in both 2007 and 2008. Among downstate urban respondents, 40.9 identified themselves as white or Caucasian in 2007, 48.2 percent in 2008; 30.5 percent of downstate urban respondents identified themselves as black or African-American in 2007, 32.6 percent in 2008; and 25.4 percent of downstate urban respondents identified themselves as American Indian, Asian or another race in 2007, 19.2 percent in 2008. Among rural respondents, 94.7 percent and 96.3 percent identified themselves as white in 2007 and 2008, respectively, while 92 percent and 87.1 percent of upstate urban respondents identified themselves as white or caucasian.



## Question:

What is your religious preference? Is it Protestant, Catholic, Christian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim, some other religion, or no religion (relig)

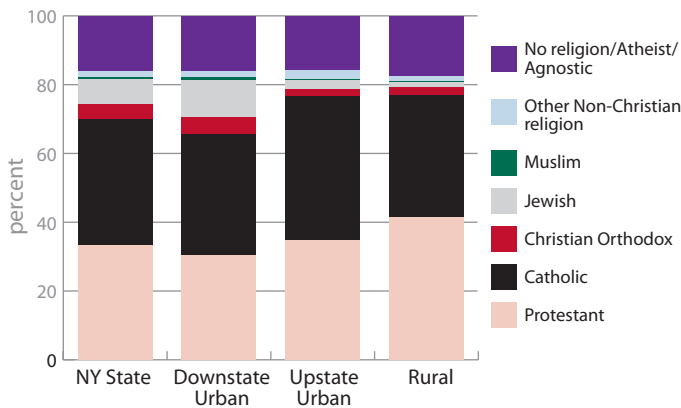
**Figure 14A: Religious Affiliation, 2007**



**Table 14A: Religious Affiliation, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Protestant	33.4%	30.2%	34.0%	42.8%
Catholic	34.4	34.3	38.4	32.0
Christian Orthodox	4.7	5.3	4.8	2.9
Jewish	6.4	8.9	3.2	1.8
Muslim	0.8	1.3	0.4	0.0
Other Non-Christian religion	3.6	3.8	4.0	2.9
No religion/Atheist/Agnostic	14.1	12.9	14.4	16.7

**Figure 14B: Religious Affiliation, 2008**



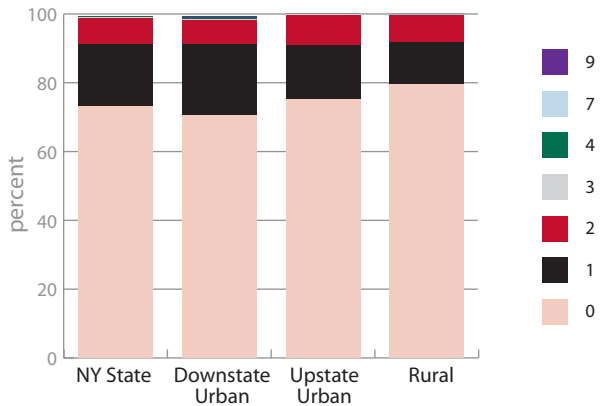
**Table 14B: Religious Affiliation, 2008**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Protestant	33.4%	30.5%	34.6%	41.3%
Catholic	36.6	34.9	41.9	35.5
Christian Orthodox	4.1	5.2	2.1	2.6
Jewish	7.3	10.7	2.6	1.3
Muslim	0.6	0.8	0.4	0.2
Other Non-Christian religion	1.9	1.8	2.6	1.5
No religion/Atheist/Agnostic	16.1	16.1	15.8	17.4

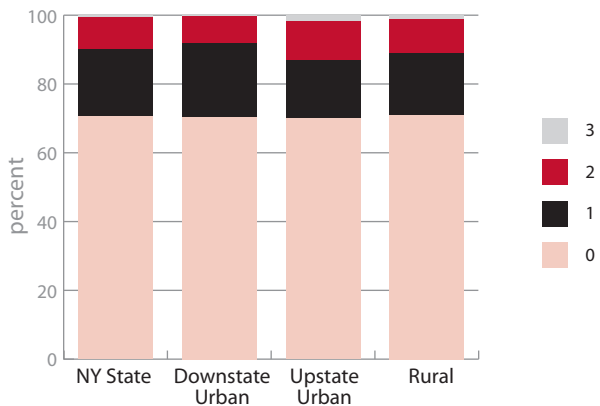
A majority of respondents described themselves as Protestant or Catholic, with those two religions accounting for 74.8 percent of rural respondents, 72.4 percent of upstate urban respondents and 64.5 percent of downstate urban respondents in 2007. The numbers are very similar in 2008. 16.7 percent of rural respondents, 14.4 percent of upstate urban respondents and 12.9 percent of downstate urban respondents said they did not identify with a religion or were atheist or agnostic in 2007, with 2008 numbers being rather similar. Downstate urban respondents were more likely to self-identify as being Christian Orthodox, Jewish, Muslim or followers of another non-Christian religion.

**Question:**

How many total people (including yourself) aged 65+ are in your household? (hhsiz@a)

**Figure 15A: Number of Adults 65+ in Household, 2007****Table 15A: Number of Adults 65+ in Household, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0	73.2%	70.6%	75.2%	79.4%
1	18.3	20.8	15.6	12.5
2	7.3	6.9	8.8	7.7
3	0.5	0.5	0.4	0.2
4	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0
7	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.2
9	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0

**Figure 15B: Number of Adults 65+ in Household, 2008****Table 15B: Number of Adults 65+ in Household, 2008**

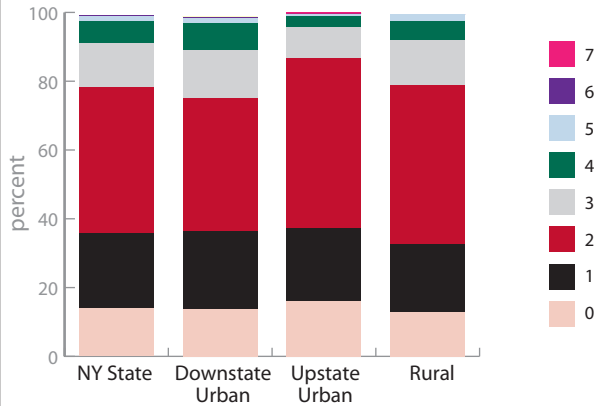
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0	70.5%	70.5%	70.0%	71.0%
1	19.7	21.4	16.9	18.1
2	9.1	7.9	11.4	9.9
3	0.7	0.3	1.7	1.1

Downstate urban respondents reported a slightly higher percentage of households with adults 65 and older than rural or upstate urban households in 2007. Downstate urban households with at least one adult over 65 accounted for 28.8 percent of such respondents, compared to 24.8 percent in upstate urban and 20.6 percent in rural households. Downstate urban households were also more likely to have three or more older adults (1.1 percent of downstate urban, versus .4 percent of upstate urban and .4 percent of rural.)

## Question:

How many total people (including yourself) ages 18-64 are in your household? (hhsz@b)

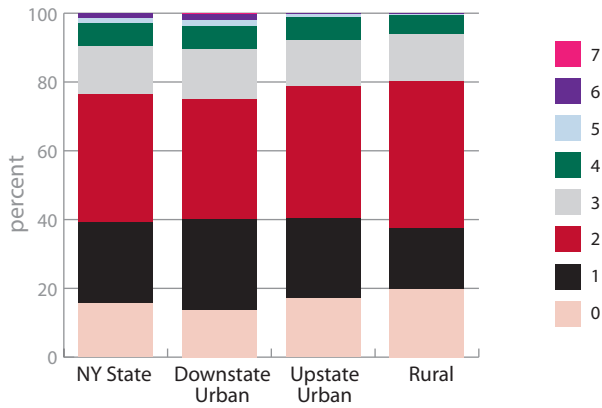
**Figure 16A: Number of Adults 18–64 in Household, 2007**



**Table 16A: Number of Adults 18–64 in Household, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0	13.9%	13.7%	16.0%	12.9%
1	21.9	22.8	22.4	19.7
2	42.4	38.6	50.4	46.1
3	12.8	14.0	8.8	13.2
4	6.6	8.1	3.2	5.5
5	1.3	1.3	0.8	2.0
6	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0
7	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2

**Figure 16B: Number of Adults 18–64 in Household, 2008**



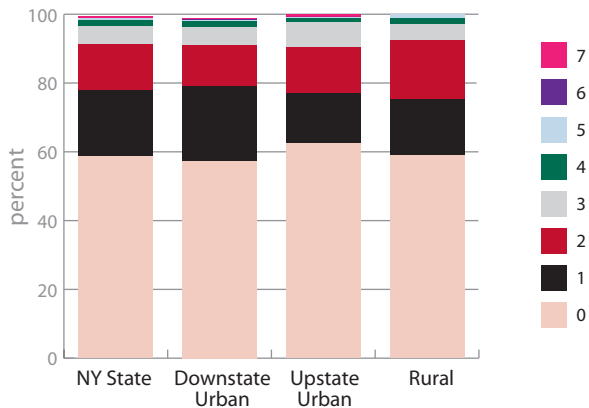
**Table 16B: Number of Adults 18–64 in Household, 2008**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0	15.6%	13.7%	17.0%	19.8%
1	23.9	26.2	23.4	17.5
2	37.0	35.1	38.3	42.9
3	14.0	14.5	13.6	13.6
4	6.6	6.6	6.4	5.6
5	1.6	1.8	0.9	0.4
6	1.2	1.8	0.4	0.2
7	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0

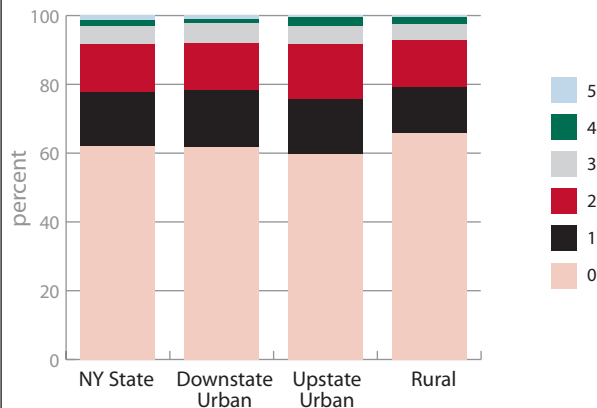
For both 2007 and 2008, the most common number of adults age 18-64 in a respondent's household was two for all geographic groups, followed by one. Less than 10 percent of respondent households contained more than three adults in this age group. Upstate urban and rural respondents most commonly had two adults age 18-64 in the household (50.4 percent for upstate urban in 2007 and 38.3 percent for 2008; 46.1 percent for rural respondents in 2007, 42.9 percent in 2008) Downstate urban respondents followed with 38.6 percent in 2007 and 35.1 percent in 2008. Respondent households with one adult age 18-64 were slightly more common among downstate urban respondents in 2008 (26.2 percent versus 23.4 percent for upstate urban and 17.5 percent for rural respondents).

**Question:**

Children (under 18) (hhsiz@c)

**Figure 17A:** Number of Children (under 18) in Household, 2007**Table 17A:** Number of Children (under 18) in Household, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0	58.7%	57.4%	62.4%	59.0%
1	19.4	21.8	14.8	16.4
2	13.2	12.2	13.2	16.9
3	5.5	5.1	7.2	4.8
4	1.6	1.8	1.2	1.8
5	0.4	0.3	0.4	0.9
6	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0
7	0.4	0.3	0.8	0.0

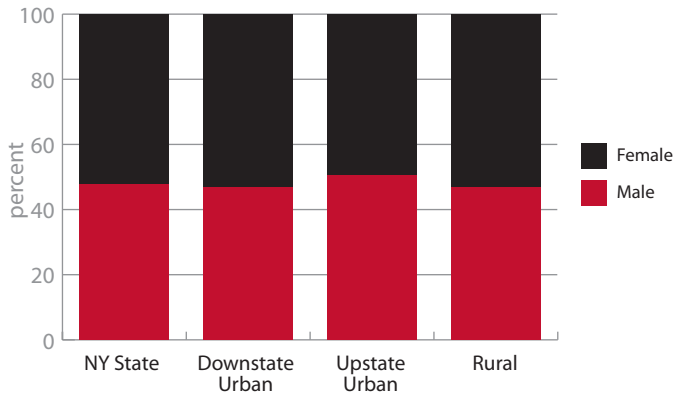
**Figure 17B:** Number of Children (under 18) in Household, 2008**Table 17B:** Number of Children (under 18) in Household, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0	62.1%	61.7%	59.6%	65.8%
1	15.5	16.3	15.7	13.1
2	14.0	13.3	15.7	13.8
3	5.4	5.6	5.5	4.5
4	1.6	1.3	2.6	1.9
5	1.4	1.0	0.4	0.6

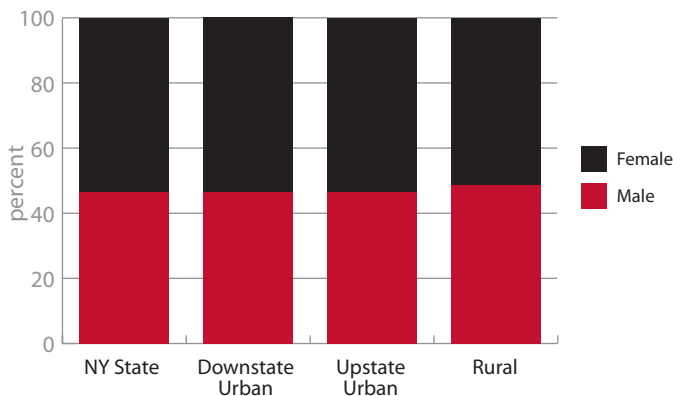
For households with children, having one or two children was the most common, for all geographic groups and across both years. Differences among groups were small, ranging from 21.8 percent of downstate urban households with one child in 2007, compared to 16.4 percent of rural households and 14.8 percent of upstate urban households with one child for the same year. In 2008, 15.7 percent of upstate urban households had two children, compared with 13.8 percent of rural households and 13.3 percent of downstate urban households. Still, most households reported having no children under 18 (65.8 percent of rural households in 2008, 61.7 percent of downstate urban households and 59.6 percent of upstate urban households).

**Question:**

Gender (gender)

**Figure 18A: Gender, 2007****Table 18A: Gender, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Male	47.7%	46.7%	50.4%	46.9%
Female	52.3	53.3	49.6	53.1

**Figure 18B: Gender, 2008****Table 18B: Gender, 2008**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Male	46.6%	46.5%	46.4%	48.6%
Female	53.4	53.5	53.6	51.4

Female respondents to the Empire State Poll outnumbered males in all but one geographic region in 2007 and 2008. About 50.4 percent of upstate urban respondents were male and 49.6 percent were female in the 2007 Empire State Poll. In 2008 46.7 percent of downstate urban respondents were male and 53.3 percent were female. In 2007 over 53 percent of rural respondents were female and 46.9 percent were male while in 2008 the split between male and female respondents was fairly even.

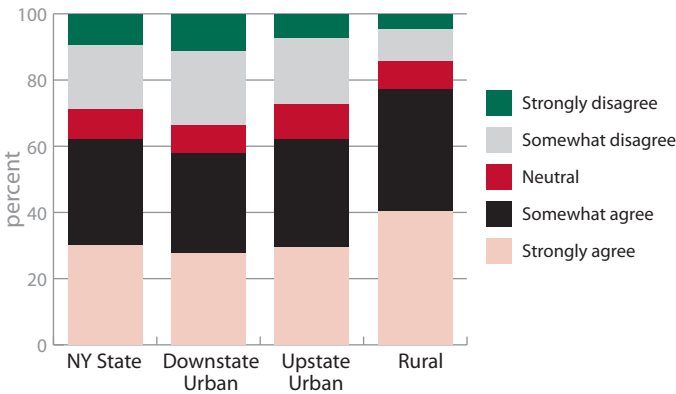
## Perceptions of Rural and Urban Life\*

### Question:

For the following statements, please indicate whether you agree, disagree, or are undecided.

Neighborhoodliness and friendliness are more characteristic of rural areas than other areas. (RBQ01@a)

**Figure 19:** Neighborhoodliness and friendliness are more characteristic of rural areas than other areas, 2008



**Table 19:** Neighborhoodliness and friendliness are more characteristics of rural areas than other areas, 2008

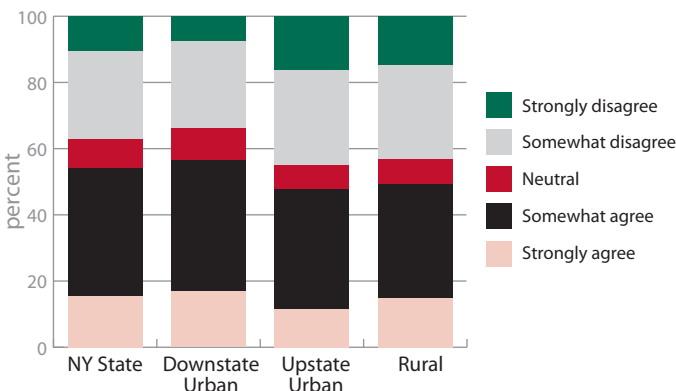
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	30.0%	27.8%	29.6%	40.3%
Somewhat agree	32.2	30.1	32.6	36.9
Neutral	8.8	8.5	10.4	8.4
Somewhat disagree	19.5	22.4	20.0	9.7
Strongly disagree	9.5	11.3	7.4	4.7

Rural respondents were most likely to agree with the statement that neighborhoodliness and friendliness are more characteristic of rural areas than other areas (40.3 percent of rural respondents strongly agree, compared with 29.6 percent of upstate urban and 27.8 percent of downstate urban respondents.) Downstate urban respondents most strongly disagreed with this statement (11.3 percent of downstate urban, 7.4 percent of upstate urban and 4.7 percent of rural respondents).

### Question:

Rural communities provide few opportunities for new experiences. (RBQ01@b)

**Figure 20:** Rural communities provide few opportunities for new experiences, 2008



**Table 20:** Rural communities provide few opportunities for new experiences, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	15.5%	16.8%	11.6%	14.9%
Somewhat agree	38.4	39.6	36.1	34.4
Neutral	8.8	9.8	7.3	7.4
Somewhat disagree	26.8	26.2	28.8	28.4
Strongly disagree	10.5	7.5	16.3	14.9

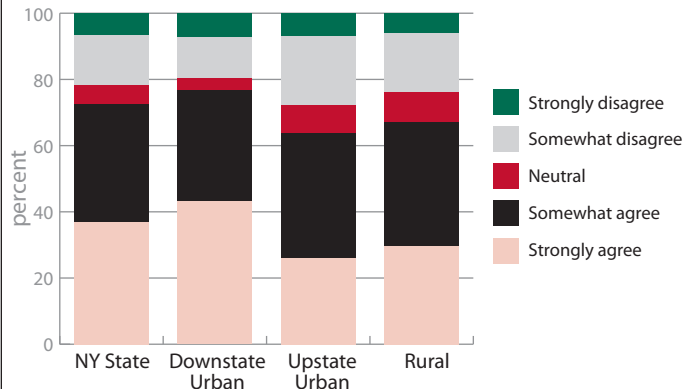
More than 50 percent of respondents (53.9 percent) agreed that rural communities provide few opportunities for new experiences, and downstate urban respondents were most likely (65.4 percent) to feel this way, while urban upstate respondents were least likely to agree (47.7 percent).

\* The following ten questions in this section were submitted to the Empire State Poll by Robin M. Blakely and David L. Brown of CaRDI and the Department of Development Sociology. See the Appendix, page 54, for a short CaRDI publication featuring these data.

## Question:

Urban living is complex, fast paced and stressful. (RBQ01@c)

**Figure 21:** Urban living is complex, fast paced and stressful, 2008



**Table 21:** Urban living is complex, fast paced and stressful, 2008

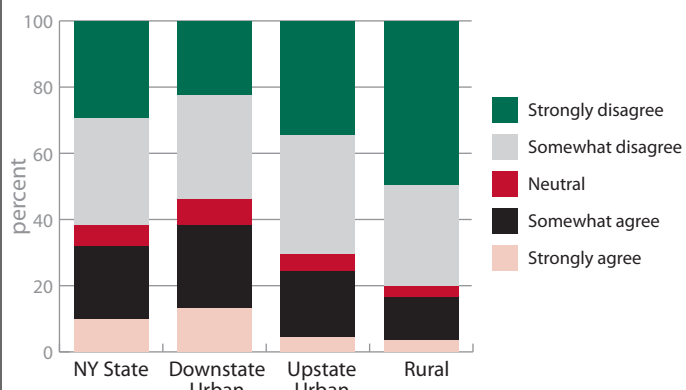
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	36.9%	43.2%	26.1%	29.7%
Somewhat agree	35.7	33.5	37.6	37.3
Neutral	5.7	3.8	8.5	9.2
Somewhat disagree	14.9	12.3	20.9	17.7
Strongly disagree	6.8	7.2	6.8	6.1

A majority of respondents in all groups agreed that “urban living is complex, fast paced and stressful,” with 76.7 percent of downstate urban respondents somewhat or strongly agreeing, compared with 67 percent of rural respondents and 60.7 percent of upstate urban respondents. Upstate urban respondents were most likely to disagree with this statement (27.7 percent).

## Question:

Rural life is monotonous and boring. (RBQ01@d)

**Figure 22:** Rural life is monotonous and boring, 2008



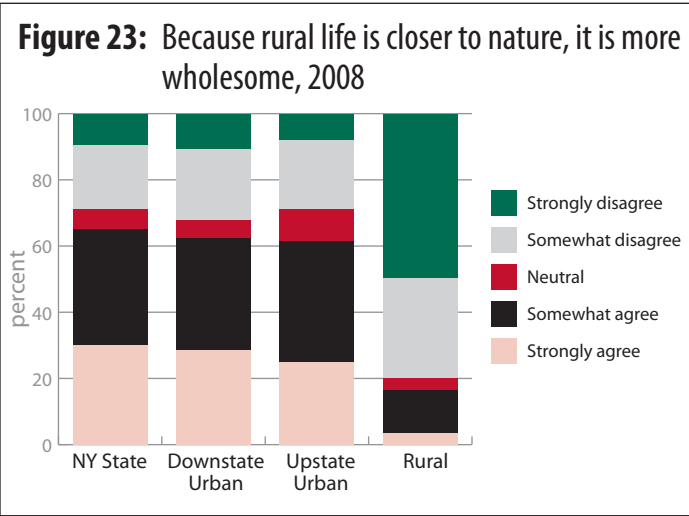
**Table 22:** Rural life is monotonous and boring, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	9.8%	13.1%	4.3%	3.4%
Somewhat agree	22.1	25.3	20.1	13.1
Neutral	6.4	7.7	5.1	3.4
Somewhat disagree	32.1	31.4	35.9	30.3
Strongly disagree	29.6	22.4	34.6	49.8

A majority of respondents across all groups disagreed with the statement that “rural life is monotonous and boring,” with nearly half (49.8 percent) of rural respondents strongly disagreeing and another 30.3 percent somewhat disagreeing. Downstate urban respondents were the most likely to agree with the statement (38.4 percent) and rural respondents least likely (16.5 percent).

Question:

Because rural life is closer to nature, it is more wholesome. (RBQ01@e)



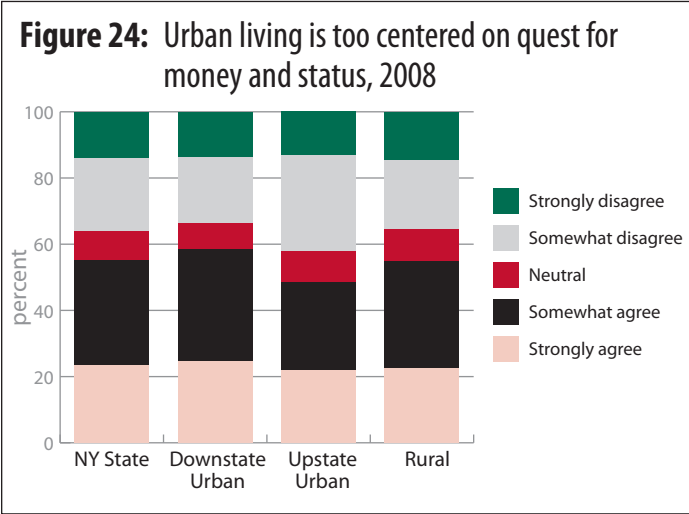
**Table 23:** Because rural life is closer to nature, it is more wholesome, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	30.1%	28.5%	24.8%	3.4%
Somewhat agree	34.9	34.1	36.8	13.1
Neutral	6.1	5.4	9.4	3.4
Somewhat disagree	19.4	21.3	20.9	30.3
Strongly disagree	9.6	10.8	8.1	49.8

A majority of respondents across all three groups agreed with the statement “because rural life is closer to nature, it is more wholesome,” with 65 percent of rural respondents. Interestingly, rural respondents were *far* more likely to with this statement than any other geographic group (80.1 percent). 62.6 percent of downstate urban respondents, and 61.6 percent of upstate urban respondents expressing agreement.

Question:

Urban living is too centered on quest for money and status. (RBQ01@f)



**Table 24:** Urban living is too centered on quest for money and status, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	23.5%	24.7%	21.9%	22.4%
Somewhat agree	31.6	33.6	26.6	32.5
Neutral	8.8	8.1	9.3	9.7
Somewhat disagree	22.0	19.8	29.1	20.7
Strongly disagree	14.1	13.7	13.1	14.7

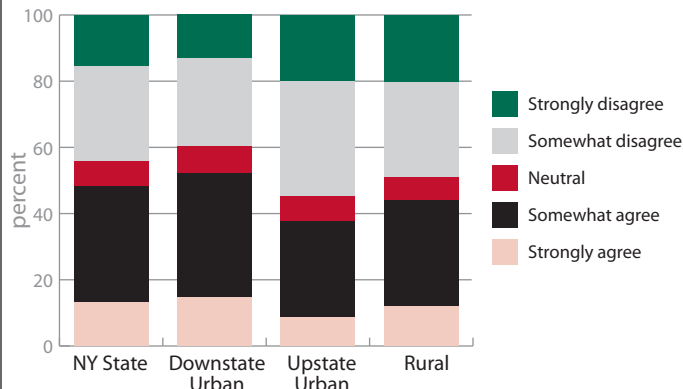
Downstate urban respondents (58.3 percent) were the most likely to agree with the statement “urban living is too centered on quest for money and status” compared to rural respondents (54.9 percent) and upstate urban respondents (48.5 percent). with the statement “urban living is too centered on quest for money and status.” Upstate urban respondent were the most likely to disagree with this statement (42.2 percent).



## Question:

Rural communities provide few opportunities for the individual to get ahead in life. (RBQ01@g)

**Figure 25:** Rural communities provide few opportunities for the individual to get ahead in life, 2008



**Table 25:** Rural communities provide few opportunities for the individual to get ahead in life, 2008

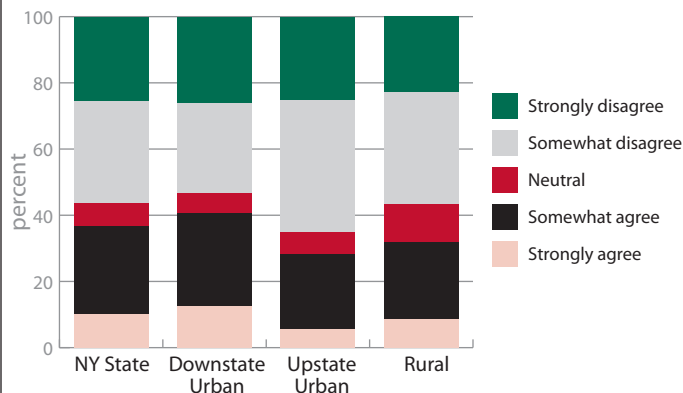
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	13.0%	14.6%	8.5%	11.9%
Somewhat agree	35.1	37.6	29.1	32.3
Neutral	7.7	8.2	7.7	6.7
Somewhat disagree	28.6	26.6	34.6	28.9
Strongly disagree	15.6	13.0	20.1	20.3

Upstate urban respondents (54.7 percent) and rural respondents (49.2 percent) were more likely to disagree with the statement “rural communities provide few opportunities for the individual to get ahead in life,” than were downstate urban respondents (39.6 percent). Downstate urban respondents were the most likely to agree (52.2 percent).

## Question:

The relationships among people in urban areas are impersonal and uncaring. (RBQ01@h)

**Figure 26:** The relationships among people in urban areas are impersonal and uncaring, 2008

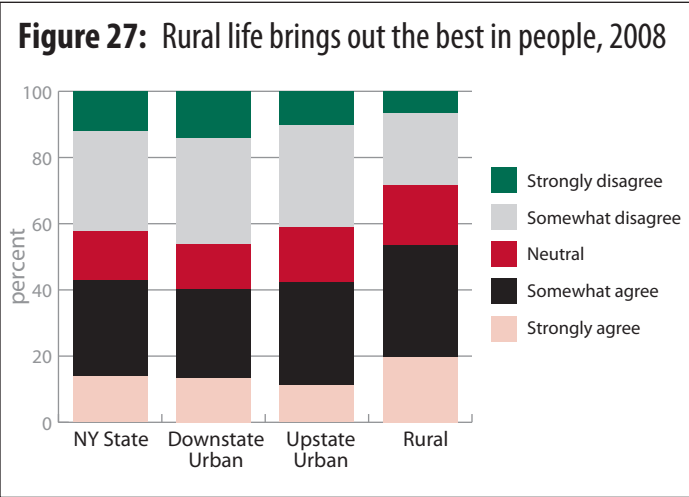


**Table 26:** The relationships among people in urban areas are impersonal and uncaring, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	10.2%	12.5%	5.6%	8.5%
Somewhat agree	26.3	28.0	22.7	23.3
Neutral	7.0	6.1	6.4	11.5
Somewhat disagree	30.9	27.2	39.9	33.9
Strongly disagree	25.4	26.2	25.3	22.8

Respondents in all three groups disagreed with the statement, “the relationships among people in urban areas are impersonal and uncaring.” Upstate urban respondents (65.2 percent) were most likely to disagree, while downstate urban respondents were the least likely to disagree, although a majority did disagree (53.4 percent). Downstate urban respondents (40.5 percent) were the most likely geographic group to agree with the statement.

**Question:**  
Rural life brings out the best in people. (RBQ01@i)

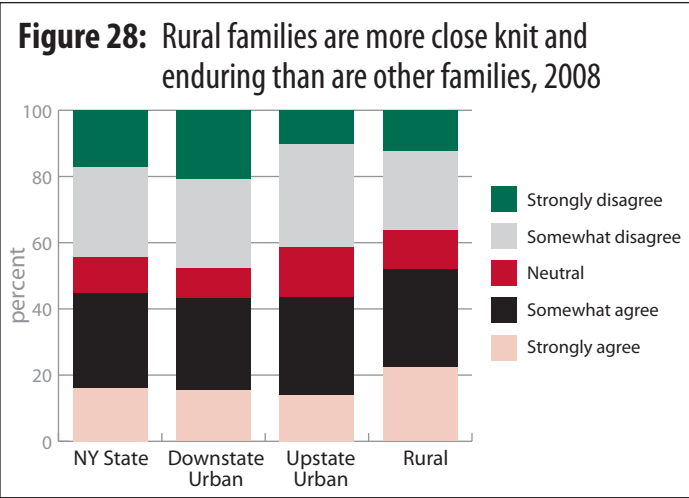


**Table 27:** Rural life brings out the best in people, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	13.8%	13.3%	11.1%	19.8%
Somewhat agree	29.2	26.9	31.2	33.7
Neutral	14.7	13.3	16.7	18.0
Somewhat disagree	30.2	32.3	30.8	22.0
Strongly disagree	12.1	14.1	10.3	6.5

Rural respondents most frequently agreed (53.5 percent) with the statement, “rural life brings out the best in people,” while downstate respondents expressed the most disagreement (46.4 percent).

**Question:**  
Rural families are more close knit and enduring than are other families. (RBQ01@j)



**Table 28:** Rural families are more close knit and enduring than are other families, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly agree	16.1%	15.4%	14.0%	22.3%
Somewhat agree	28.7	27.8	29.4	29.9
Neutral	10.7	9.0	15.3	11.7
Somewhat disagree	27.3	27.0	31.1	23.6
Strongly disagree	17.2	20.8	10.2	12.4

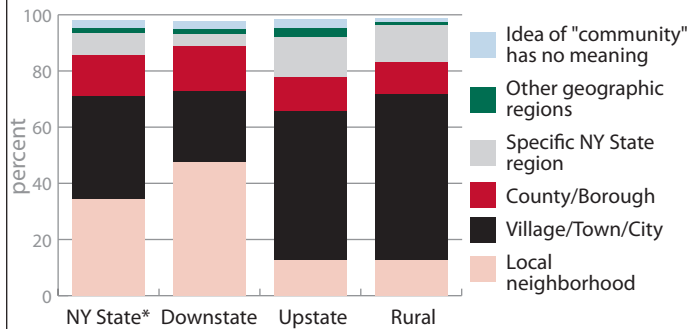
When read the statement “rural families are closer knit and enduring than are other families,” upstate urban respondents were split on whether they agreed or disagreed (43.4 percent of upstate urban somewhat or strongly agreed, while 41.4 percent somewhat or strongly disagreed). Downstate urban respondents were similarly split, although downstaters were slightly more likely to disagree. Among rural respondents, 52.2 percent somewhat or strongly agreed, while 36 percent somewhat or strongly disagreed.

# Community Issues\*

## Question:

First, people often refer to the community in which they live and work. However, the idea of community may mean different things to different people. When you refer to your community, what geographic area best describes what you mean? (commean)

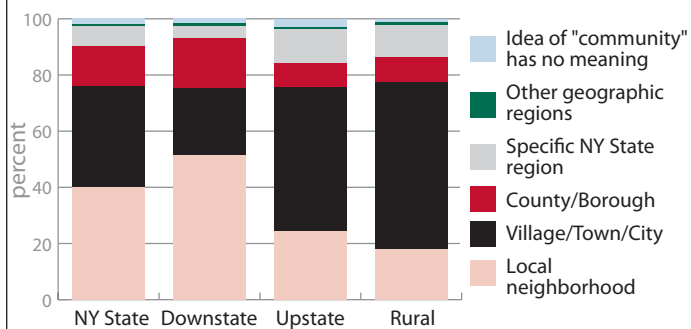
**Figure 28A: Meaning of community, 2007**



**Table 28A: Meaning of community, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Local neighborhood	34.4%	47.5%	12.8%	12.7%
Village/Town/City	36.6	25.4	52.8	58.8
County/Borough	14.6	16.0	12.4	11.4
Specific NY State region	7.8	4.3	14.0	13.2
Other geographic regions	2.0	1.8	3.2	1.3
Idea of "community" has no meaning	2.6	2.8	3.2	1.3

**Figure 28B: Meaning of community, 2008**



**Table 28B: Meaning of community, 2008**

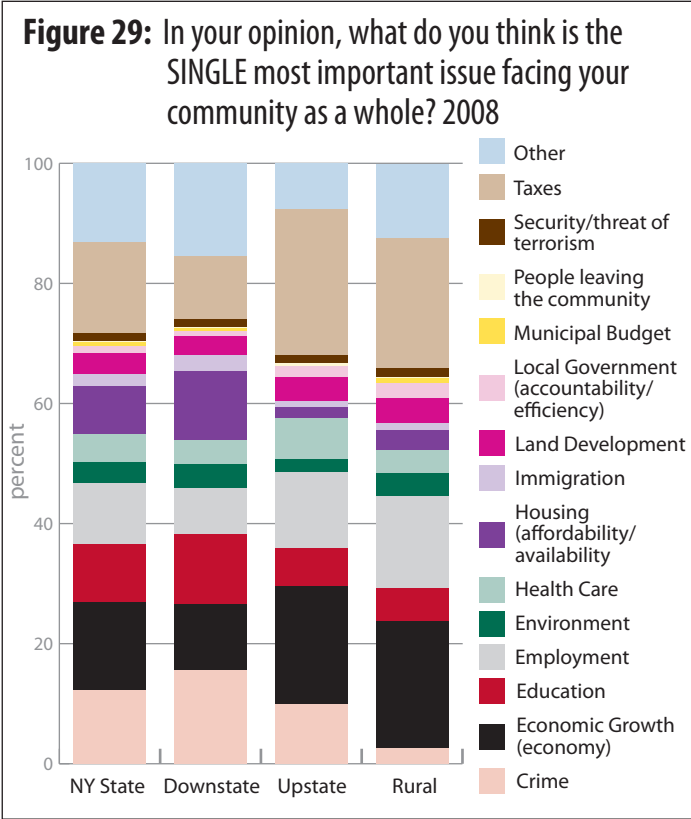
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Local neighborhood	40.1%	51.6%	24.3%	18.0%
Village/Town/City	35.8	23.8	51.5	59.4
County/Borough	14.4	17.7	8.5	9.0
Specific NY State region	7.0	4.3	11.9	11.2
Other geographic regions	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.1
Idea of "community" has no meaning	1.9	1.8	3.0	1.3

In both 2007 and 2008, downstate urban respondents were more likely to think of their community as their local neighborhood (47.5 percent in 2007 and 51.6 percent in 2008), while upstate urban and rural respondents were more likely to define community as their village, town or city (52.8 percent of upstate urban in 2007 and 51.5 percent in 2008 and 58.8 percent of rural in 2007 and 59.4 percent in 2008).

\*See pages 55-58 in the Appendix for CaRDI publications on this topic.

Question:

In your opinion, what do you think is the SINGLE most important issue facing your community as a whole? (comimp)



**Table 29:** In your opinion, what do you think is the most important issue facing your community as a whole? 2008

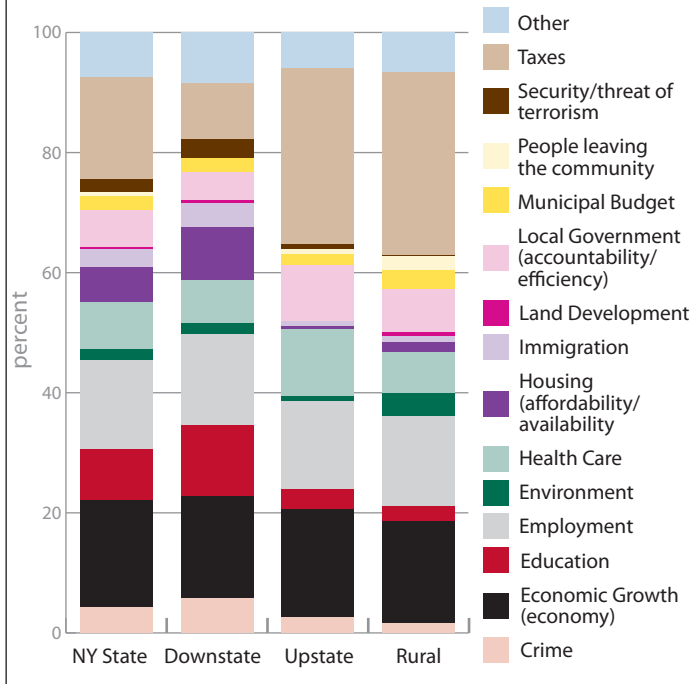
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Crime	12.1%	15.5%	9.9%	2.5%
Economic Growth (Economy)	14.7	11.0	19.8	21.3
Education	9.5	11.8	6.3	5.4
Employment	10.1	7.5	12.6	15.4
Environment	3.6	4.0	2.3	3.8
Health Care	4.5	4.0	6.8	3.8
Housing (affordability/availability)	8.0	11.5	1.8	3.4
Immigration	2.0	2.7	0.9	1.1
Land Development	3.5	3.2	4.1	4.1
Local Government (accountability/efficiency)	1.3	0.8	1.8	2.5
Municipal Budget	0.5	0.5	0.0	0.9
People leaving the community	0.3	0.3	0.5	0.2
Security/threat of terrorism	1.3	1.3	1.4	1.4
Taxes	15.1	10.4	24.3	21.7
Other	13.2	15.5	7.7	12.4

Taxes was most frequently identified by upstate urban respondents as the single most important issue facing their community as a whole (24.3 percent), followed by economic growth (19.8 percent) and employment (12.6 percent). Downstate urbanites felt that crime was most important (15.5 percent), followed by education (11.8 percent), housing (11.5 percent) and economic growth (11 percent). Rural respondents also named taxes as the most important issue (21.7 percent), followed by economic growth (21.3 percent) and employment (15.4 percent).

## Question:

In your opinion, what do you think is the **SINGLE** most important issue facing New York State as a whole? (nysimp)

**Figure 30:** In your opinion, what do you think is the **SINGLE** most important issue facing New York State as a whole? 2008



**Table 30:** In your opinion, what do you think is the **SINGLE** most important issue facing New York State as a whole? 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Crime	4.3%	5.8%	2.6%	1.6%
Economic Growth (Economy)	17.7	16.8	18.0	17.0
Education	8.4	11.8	3.4	2.5
Employment	14.9	15.2	14.6	15.0
Environment	1.9	1.8	0.9	3.8
Health Care	7.8	7.1	11.2	6.9
Housing (affordability/availability)	5.8	8.9	0.4	1.8
Immigration	3.0	3.9	0.9	0.9
Land Development	0.4	0.5	0.0	0.7
Local Government (accountability/efficiency)	6.1	4.7	9.4	7.1
Municipal Budget	2.4	2.4	1.7	3.3
People leaving the community	0.6	0.0	0.9	2.2
Security/threat of terrorism	2.1	3.1	0.9	0.2
Taxes	17.0	9.4	29.2	30.4
Other	7.5	8.4	6.0	6.7

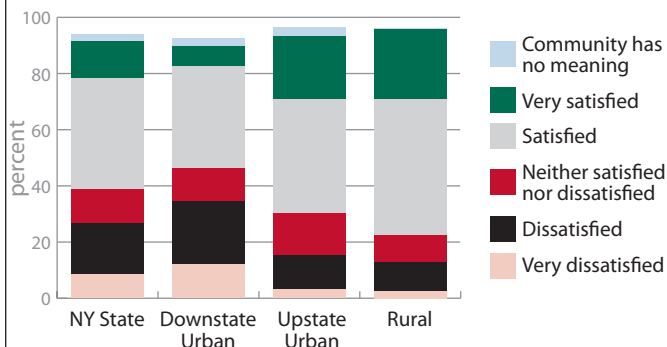
When asked about issues facing the state, upstate urban and rural respondents were most likely to name taxes as the most important issue (29.2 percent for upstate urban and 30.4 percent for rural). Economic growth was the second most frequently identified issue named by both geographic groups (18 percent for upstate urban and 17 percent for rural) and employment was the third most frequent response (14.6 percent for upstate urban and 15 percent for rural). Downstate urban respondents named economic growth as the most important issue (16.8 percent), but also felt strongly about employment (15.2 percent) and education (11.8 percent).

## Question:

Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Thinking about availability, cost, quality, and any other considerations important to you, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the following aspects of your community?

Are you very dissatisfied, dissatisfied, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, satisfied or very satisfied with quality of public education? (comsts@a)

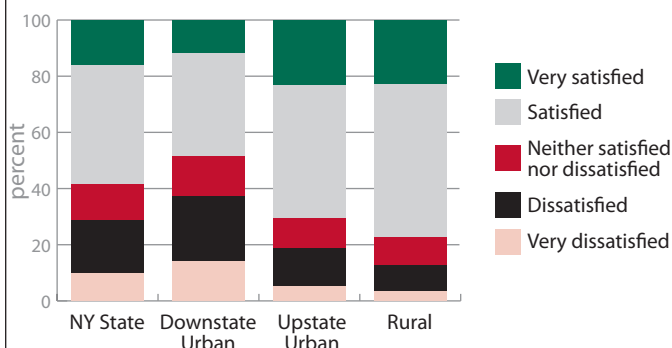
**Figure 31A:** Satisfaction with own community's quality of public education, 2007



**Table 31A:** Satisfaction with own community's quality of public education, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	8.6%	12.2%	3.2%	2.6%
Dissatisfied	18.5	22.8	12.0	10.3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12.0	11.7	15.2	9.4
Satisfied	39.4	36.3	40.4	48.7
Very satisfied	13.2	7.1	22.4	24.8
Idea of "community" has no meaning	2.5	2.8	3.2	0.4

**Figure 31B:** Satisfaction with own community's quality of public education, 2008



**Table 31B:** Satisfaction with own community's quality of public education, 2008

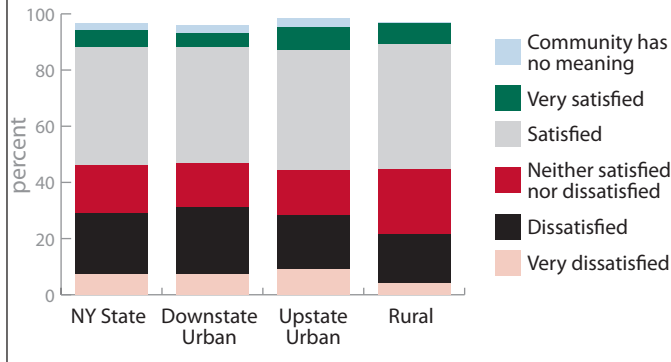
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	9.9%	13.9%	5.3%	3.3%
Dissatisfied	18.8	23.2	13.2	9.5
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	12.8	14.4	11.0	9.7
Satisfied	42.2	36.5	47.4	54.7
Very satisfied	16.1	12.0	23.2	22.9

In 2008, rural respondents were the most satisfied with the quality of public education in their community, with 77.6 percent of respondents satisfied or very satisfied. Upstate urban respondents were second, with 70.6 percent satisfied or very satisfied. Among downstate urban respondents, only 48.5 percent said they were satisfied or very satisfied and 37.1 percent said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. These numbers are consistent with 2007 numbers for rural respondents (73.5 percent reported being satisfied or very satisfied) and for downstate urban respondents (43.4 percent reported being satisfied or very satisfied) but are higher in 2008 for upstate urban respondents, with 62.8 percent reporting being satisfied or very satisfied in 2007.

**Question:**

your local city or town government? (comsts@b)

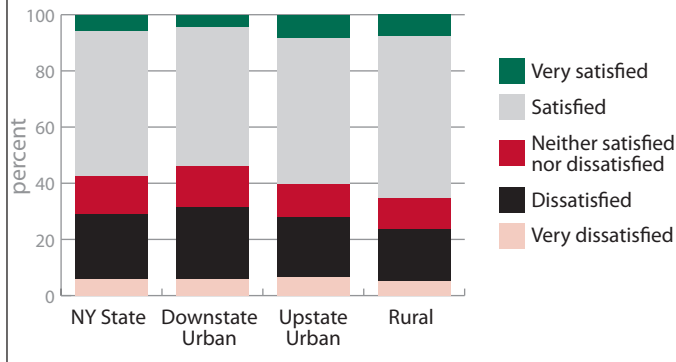
**Figure 32A:** Satisfaction with own community's local city or town government, 2007



**Table 32A:** Satisfaction with own community's local city or town government, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	7.3%	7.4%	9.2%	4.2%
Dissatisfied	21.7	23.6	19.2	17.3
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	17.1	15.7	16.0	23.2
Satisfied	42.2	41.6	42.4	44.5
Very satisfied	6.0	4.8	8.4	7.5
Community has no meaning	2.5	2.8	3.2	0.4

**Figure 32B:** Satisfaction with own community's local city or town government, 2008



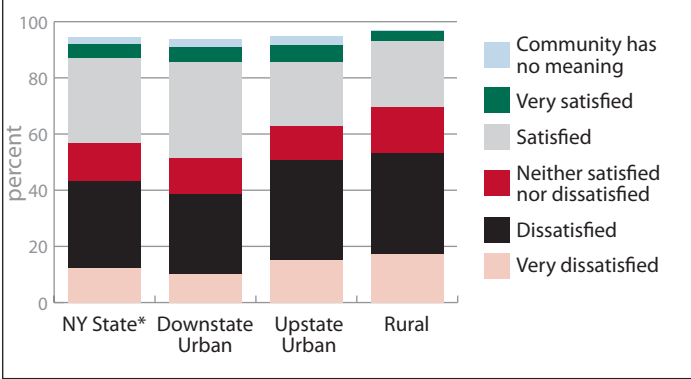
**Table 32B:** Satisfaction with own community's local city or town government, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	6.0%	6.0%	6.6%	5.2%
Dissatisfied	23.0	25.3	21.1	18.4
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.6	14.6	11.9	11.1
Satisfied	51.5	49.6	52.0	57.7
Very satisfied	5.7	4.4	8.4	7.6

Respondents as a whole were more satisfied with their local city or town governments in 2008 than in 2007. Rural respondents were more satisfied in 2008 (65.3 percent) than in 2007 (53 percent). Upstate respondents were also more satisfied with their community's local city or town government in 2008 than in 2007 (60.4 versus 50.8 percent). Downstate urban respondents responded 54 percent satisfied or very satisfied in 2008, up from 46.4 percent in 2007.

**Question:**  
 Employment (quality and availability)? (comsts@c)

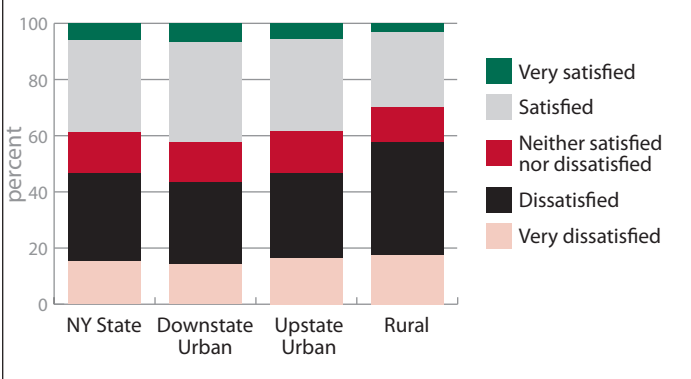
**Figure 33A:** Satisfaction with employment (quality and availability of jobs) in the local community, 2007



**Table 33A:** Satisfaction with employment (quality and availability of jobs) in the local community, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	12.4%	10.2%	15.2%	17.3%
Dissatisfied	30.9	28.4	35.6	35.7
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.5	12.7	12.0	16.4
Satisfied	30.2	34.5	22.8	23.7
Very satisfied	5.0	5.1	6.0	3.5
Community has no meaning	2.5	2.8	3.2	0.4

**Figure 33B:** Satisfaction with employment (quality and availability of jobs) in the local community, 2008



**Table 33B:** Satisfaction with employment (quality and availability of jobs) in the local community, 2008

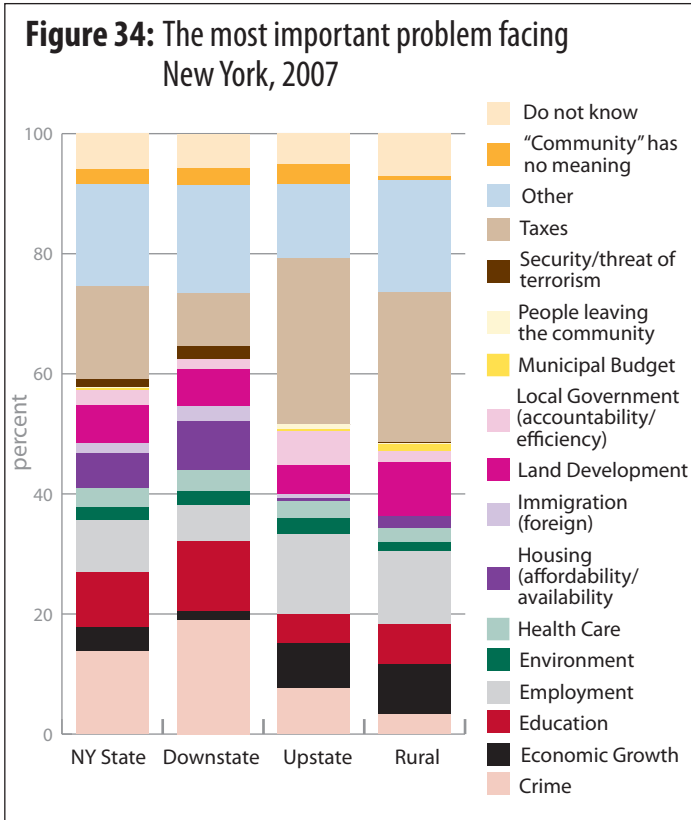
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	15.1%	14.1%	16.4%	17.6%
Dissatisfied	31.5	29.3	30.2	40.0
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	14.3	14.4	15.1	12.7
Satisfied	32.9	35.4	32.4	26.4
Very satisfied	6.0	6.9	5.8	3.3

Rural respondents were less satisfied than downstate urban respondents with the quality and availability of local jobs in both 2007 and 2008. In 2007, 53 percent of rural respondents were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with job availability, compared to 57.6 percent in 2008. Only 38.6 percent of downstate urban respondents in 2007 and 43.4 percent in 2008 were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Upstate urban respondents were in the middle, with 50.8 percent dissatisfied or very dissatisfied in 2007 and 46.6 percent in 2008.



## Question:

In your opinion, what do you think is the SINGLE most important issue facing people in New York State today?  
(RBQ1b + RBQ1ar)



**Table 34: The most important problem facing New York, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Crime	13.7%	19.0%	7.6%	3.3%
Economic Growth	4.1	1.5	7.6	8.3
Education	9.2	11.5	4.8	6.8
Employment	8.5	6.1	13.2	12.0
Environment	2.3	2.3	2.8	1.5
Health Care	3.2	3.6	2.8	2.4
Housing (affordability/availability)	5.7	8.1	0.4	2.0
Immigration (foreign)	1.7	2.5	0.8	0.0
Land Development	6.4	6.1	4.8	9.0
Local Government (accountability/efficiency)	2.5	1.8	5.6	1.8
Municipal Budget	0.3	0.0	0.4	1.1
People leaving the community	0.2	0.0	0.8	0.2
Security/threat of terrorism	1.3	2.0	0.0	0.2
Taxes	15.5	8.9	27.6	25.0
Other	16.9	18.00	12.4	18.6
Community has no meaning	2.5	2.8	3.2	0.7
Do not know	6.0	5.8	5.2	7.1

Upstate urban and rural respondents were most likely to list taxes as the most important problem facing the state (27.6 percent for upstate urban and 25 percent for rural), while downstate respondents listed crime as the most important issue (19 percent) and "other" issues as a close second (18 percent). Employment also ranked high on the list for upstate urban (13.2 percent) and rural (12.1 percent) respondents. Education ranked next for downstate urban respondents (11.4 percent).

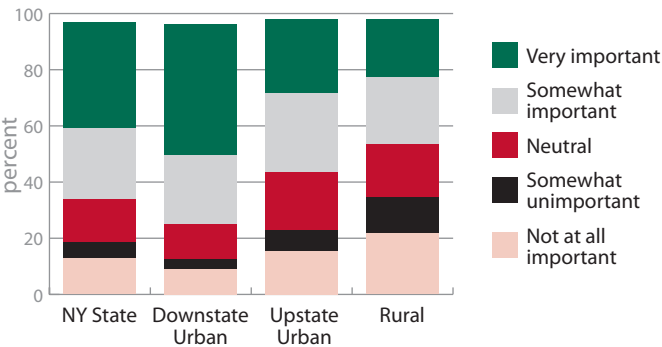
# Immigration Issues\*

## Question:

During the past year, there has been a lot of discussion about immigration to the United States. We want to ask you a few questions about immigrants in your community.

If immigrants settled in your community, how important is it for the city or township you live in to help immigrants find affordable housing? (MPQ1)

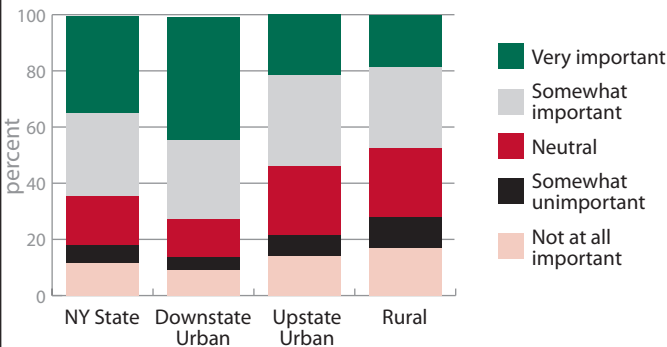
**Figure 35A:** City should help immigrants find affordable housing, 2007



**Table 35A:** City should help immigrants find affordable housing, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Not at all important	12.8%	9.1%	15.6%	21.7%
Somewhat unimportant	5.7	3.3	7.2	12.9
Neutral	15.5	12.7	20.8	18.9
Somewhat important	25.1	24.4	28.0	23.9
Very important	37.8	46.7	26.4	20.4

**Figure 35B:** City should help immigrants find affordable housing, 2008



**Table 35B:** City should help immigrants find affordable housing, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Not at all important	11.6%	9.1%	13.9%	17.0%
Somewhat unimportant	6.1	4.3	7.6	11.0
Neutral	17.6	13.6	24.5	24.5
Somewhat important	29.5	28.3	32.5	28.8
Very important	34.7	43.7	21.5	18.5

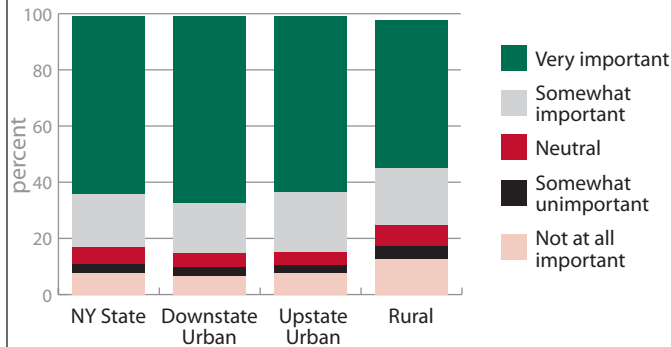
In both 2007 and 2008, a majority of New Yorkers considered it somewhat or very important for their city or town to help immigrants find affordable housing. Downstate urban respondents are most likely of all New York State respondents to feel this way (71.1 percent in 2007 and 72 percent in 2008), while rural respondents were the least likely (44.3 percent in 2007 and 47.3 percent in 2008).

\*See pages 59-63 for CaRDI publications on this topic. Max J. Pfeffer and Pilar A. Parra submitted questions MPQ1-MPQ4, and Mary Jo Dudley submitted question MJQ2.

## Question:

If immigrants settled in your community, how important is it for the city of township you live in to provide English language training for immigrants? (MPQ2)

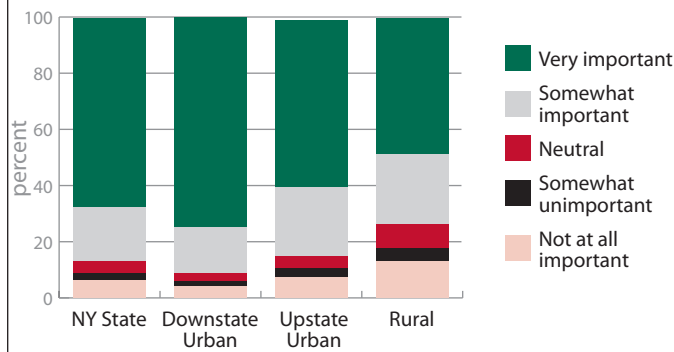
**Figure 36A:** City should provide English training for immigrants, 2007



**Table 36A:** City should provide English training for immigrants, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Not at all important	7.8%	6.6%	7.6%	12.7%
Somewhat unimportant	3.2	3.0	2.8	4.4
Neutral	5.9	5.3	4.8	7.7
Somewhat important	18.9	17.5	21.2	20.2
Very important	63.2	66.8	62.8	52.6

**Figure 36B:** City should provide English training for immigrants, 2008



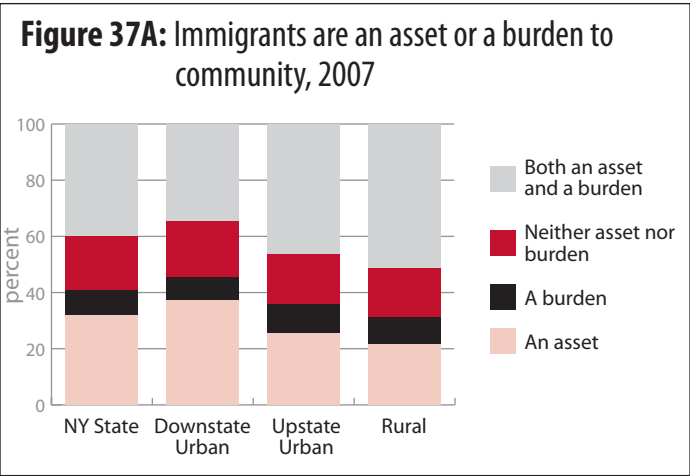
**Table 36B:** City should provide English training for immigrants, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Not at all important	6.2%	4.0%	7.2%	13.1%
Somewhat unimportant	2.6	1.8	3.4	4.7
Neutral	4.1	3.0	4.2	8.2
Somewhat important	19.4	16.4	24.5	25.2
Very important	67.3	74.5	59.5	48.4

In both 2007 and 2008, respondents across New York State, were strongly in agreement that cities and towns should provide English training to immigrants. Urban respondents, both upstate and downstate, were most likely to echo this sentiment, while rural respondents, while in favor of providing English training for immigrants, were somewhat less supportive.

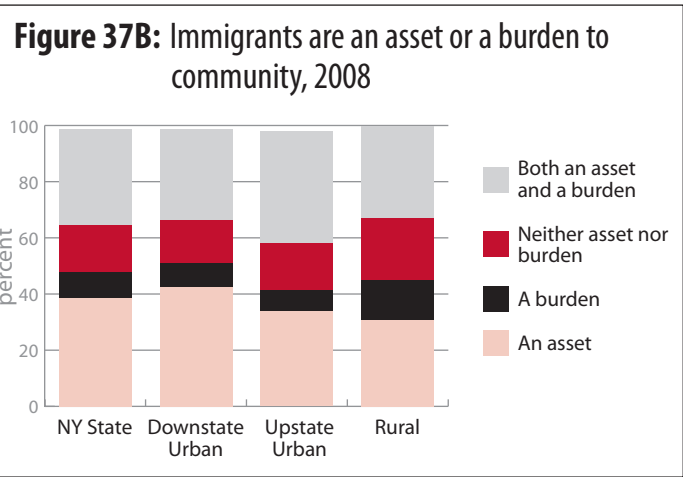
Question:

Do you consider the new immigrants to be an asset, a burden, neither an asset nor a burden, or both an asset and a burden to your community? (MPQ3)



**Table 37A:** Immigrants are an asset or a burden to community, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
An asset	31.9%	37.1%	25.5%	21.7%
A burden	8.9	8.3	10.5	9.5
Neither asset nor burden	19.4	20.0	17.6	17.6
Both an asset and burden	39.8	34.6	46.4	51.2



**Table 37B:** Immigrants are an asset or a burden to community, 2008

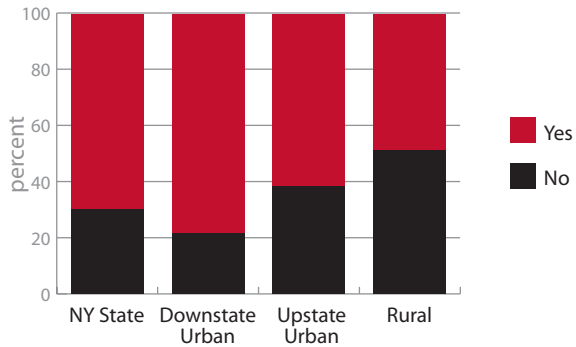
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
An asset	38.5%	42.4%	33.8%	30.8%
A burden	9.4	8.6	7.6	14.1
Neither asset nor burden	16.4	15.2	16.5	22.2
Both an asset and burden	34.4	32.6	40.1	32.7

In both 2007 and 2008, New Yorkers in general are more likely to consider new immigrants an asset than a burden, although a significant proportion view them as both an asset and a burden. Downstate urban respondents are most likely to view immigrants as an asset, while in 2008 rural respondents were most likely to view them as a burden.

## Question:

Do you personally know any immigrants, aside from relatives? (MPQ4)

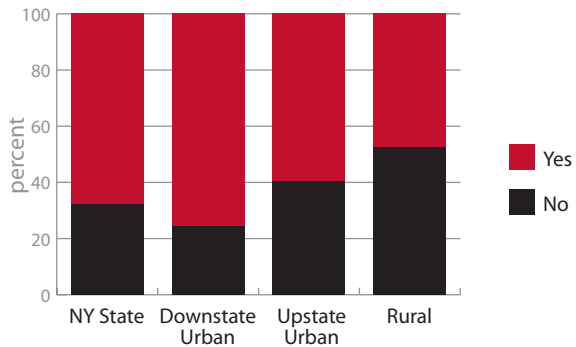
**Figure 38A: Personally know any immigrants, 2007**



**Table 38A: Personally know any immigrants, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No	30.0%	21.6%	38.4%	51.1%
Yes	69.7	78.2	61.2	48.5

**Figure 38B: Personally know any immigrants, 2008**



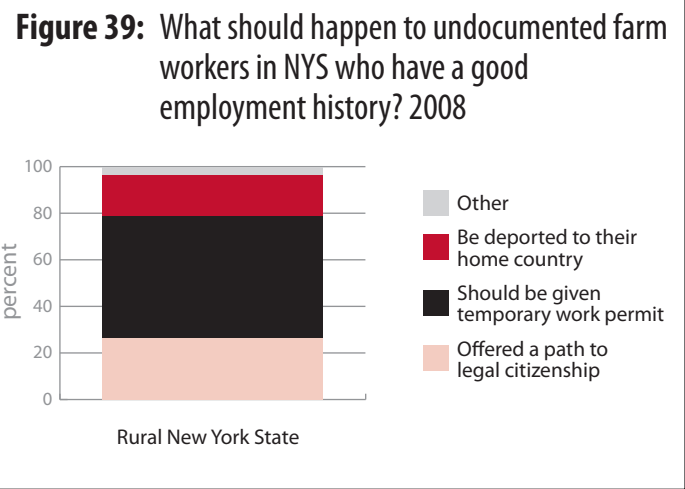
**Table 38B: Personally know any immigrants, 2008**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
No	32.3%	24.5%	40.5%	52.6%
Yes	67.6	75.5	59.1	47.4

In both 2007 and 2008, more than two-thirds of New York State respondents reported personally knowing immigrants aside from relatives. Downstate urban respondents were the most likely to know immigrants, while rural respondents were the least likely, although almost half of rural respondents indicated that they did know immigrants.

Question:

There has been a lot of discussion recently about what should happen to undocumented workers currently employed in the U.S. Focusing on just NYS farm workers, in your opinion what should happen to undocumented farm workers in NYS who have a good employment history? (MJQ2)



**Table 39:** Personally know any immigrants, 2008

	Rural NYS
Offered a path to legal citizenship	26.6%
Should be given temporary work permit	52.2
Be deported to their home country	17.4
Other	3.8

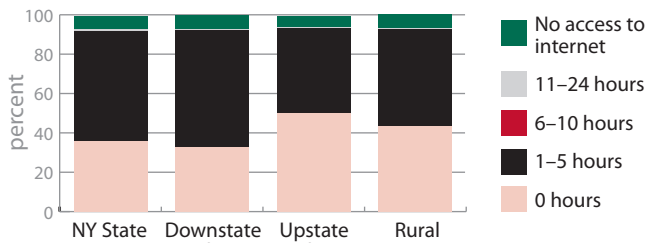
More than half (52.2 percent) said that undocumented farm workers with good work histories should be given a temporary work permit. Another 26.6 percent said they should be offered a path to legal citizenship, while only 17.4 percent suggested they be deported to their home country .

# Internet Use

## Question:

On typical day, how much time are you on the Internet/World Wide Web including sending and receiving email, surfing web pages, chatting with others, watching video, blogging, or downloading or sharing files? (int@hours)

**Figure 40:** Frequency of internet use (hours daily), 2007



**Table 40:** Frequency of internet use (daily hours), 2007

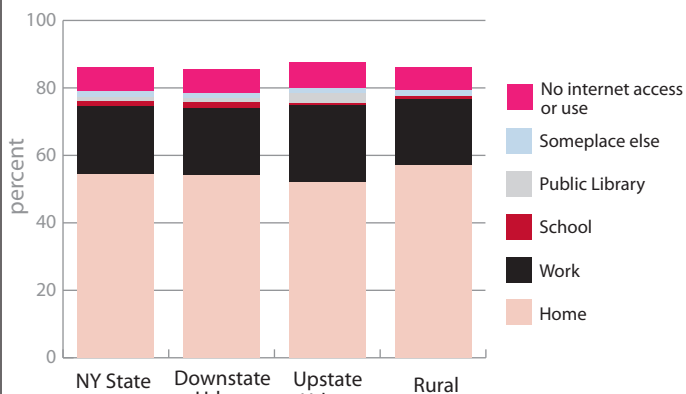
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
0 hours	35.8%	34.8%	34.0%	43.2%
1 - 5 hours	48.9	49.0	51.2	43.6
6 - 10 hours	7.0	7.9	5.6	5.7
11 - 24 hours	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.7
No access to internet	7.1	7.1	7.6	6.8

Downstate urban respondents spent the most time on the internet (46.39 percent with 1-5 hours daily and 12.74 percent with 6-10 hours), while urban respondents upstate spent the least time (50.15 percent with 0 hours and 38.98 percent with 1-5 hours). Rural respondents (6.8 percent) and downstate urban respondents (6.73 percent) reported the highest rates of not having internet access.

## Question:

Where do you access the Internet/World Wide Web most often? Is it at home, work, school, a public library, or someplace else? (webloc@a)

**Figure 41:** Most frequent web access location, 2007



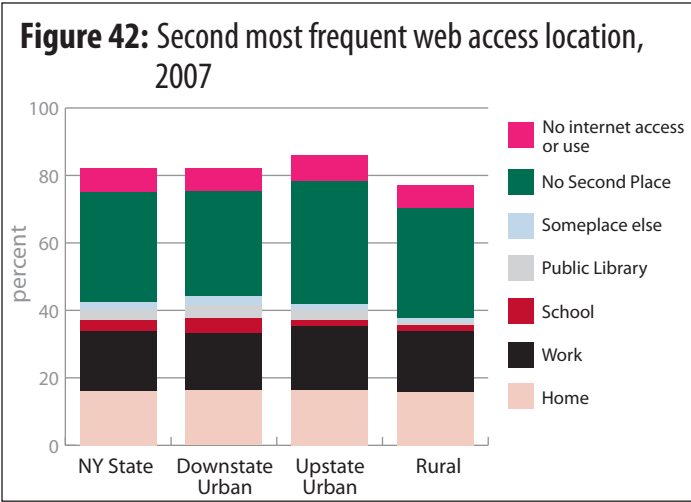
**Table 41:** Most frequent web access location, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Home	54.36%	54.06%	52.0%	57.02%
Work	20.33	20.05	22.8	19.84
School	1.27	1.52	0.8	0.88
Public library	1.36	1.27	2.8	0.0
Someplace Else	1.72	1.52	1.6	1.75
No internet access or use	7.08	7.11	7.6	6.8

Home is the most frequently cited location for accessing the internet, with more than half of all respondents indicating this choice. Rural respondents the most likely to log in at home (57 percent). Work was the second most frequently cited internet access location for all respondents. Schools and public libraries offer other access points, but in all cases, fewer than 3 percent of respondents reported using these outlets as their main access location.

Question:

Is there a second location where you access the Internet frequently? (webloc@b)



**Table 42:** Second most frequent web access location, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Home	16.1%	16.2%	16.4%	15.8%
Work	17.5	17.0	18.8	17.8
School	3.5	4.6	2.0	2.0
Public library	2.9	3.6	2.8	0.9
Someplace Else	2.3	2.8	2.0	1.1
No second place	32.8	31.0	36.4	32.9
No internet access or use	7.1	7.1	7.6	6.8

One-third of respondents indicated that there was no second location for them to access the internet. Those respondents who did indicate a second location to access the internet were fairly evenly split between home and work locations, with no significant differences in these choices among the geographic regions.

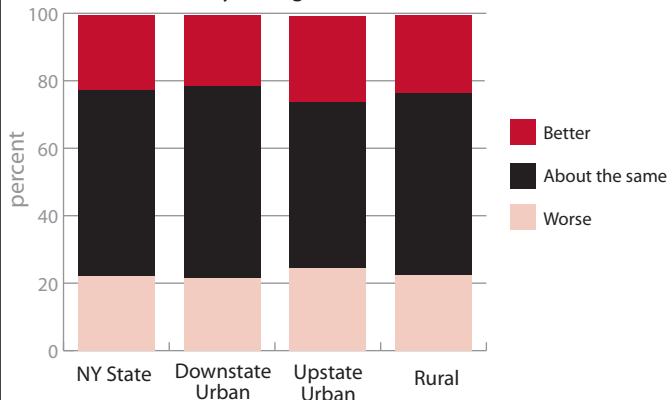


# The Economy & Personal Finance\*

## Question:

We are interested in how people are getting along financially these days. Would you say that you (or your household) are better off, worse off or just about the same financially as you were a year ago? (finpast)

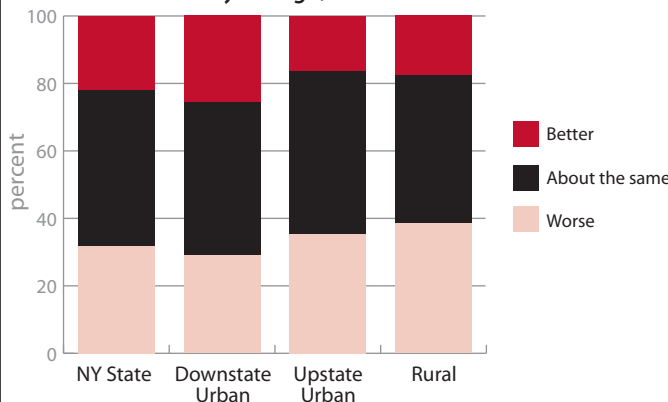
**Figure 43A:** Personal or household financial situation vs. one year ago, 2007



**Table 43A:** Personal or household financial situation vs. one year ago, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	22.1%	21.6%	24.4%	22.4%
About the same	55.0	56.9	49.2	53.9
Better	22.4	21.1	25.6	23.0

**Figure 43B:** Personal or household financial situation vs. one year ago, 2008



**Table 43B:** Personal or household financial situation vs. one year ago, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	31.9%	29.0%	35.4%	38.6%
About the same	46.1	45.5	48.1	44.0
Better	22.0	25.4	16.5	17.5

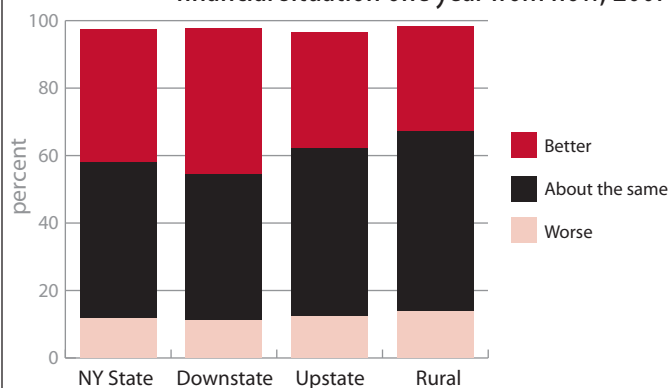
In 2007, about half of the respondents felt that their financial situation was about the same as the year before (56.9 percent downstate urban, 53.9 percent rural and 49.2 percent upstate urban). In 2008, these numbers fell slightly. But there were more notable increases for all geographic groups in the percent of people saying their financial situation was worse than a year ago (24.4 percent of upstate urban in 2007 compared to 35.4 percent in 2008; 21.6 percent of downstate urban in 2007 compared to 29 percent in 2008; 22.4 percent of rural in 2007 and 38.6 percent in 2008).

\*See page 64 in the Appendix for a CaRDI publication on this topic.

## Question:

Now looking ahead, do you think that a year from now you (and your household) will be better off financially, worse off, or just about the same as now? (finfut)

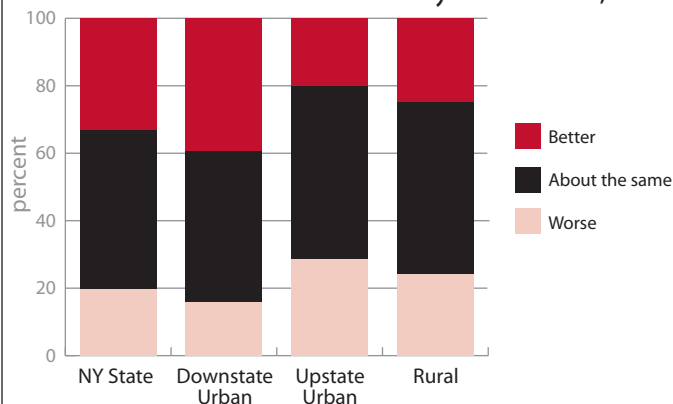
**Figure 44A:** Expectation of personal or household financial situation one year from now, 2007



**Table 44A:** Expectation of personal or household financial situation one year from now, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	11.7%	11.2%	12.4%	13.8%
About the same	46.5	43.1	49.6	53.5
Better	39.4	43.4	34.4	30.9

**Figure 44B:** Expectation of personal or household financial situation one year from now, 2008



**Table 44B:** Expectation of personal or household financial situation one year from now, 2008

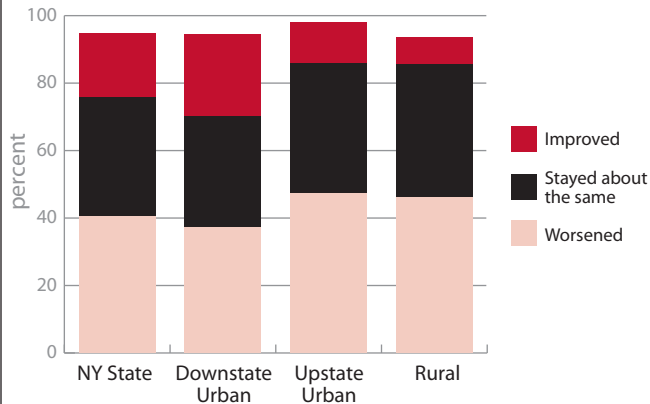
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	19.8%	15.8%	28.8%	24.1%
About the same	47.2	44.7	51.1	51.1
Better	33.1	39.5	20.2	24.8

In 2008, fewer respondents felt their financial situation would improve in the next year than did in 2007. In fact, more people thought their situation would become worse, especially for upstate urban respondents (34.4 percent said their financial situation would be better in a year in 2007; only 20.2 percent said that in 2008). Still, the percentage of respondents who felt their financial situation would be about the same stayed relatively stable over the period.

## Question:

Thinking about the economy in New York State as a whole, would you say that **OVER THE PAST YEAR** the state's economy has gotten better, stayed about the same, or gotten worse? (econpast)

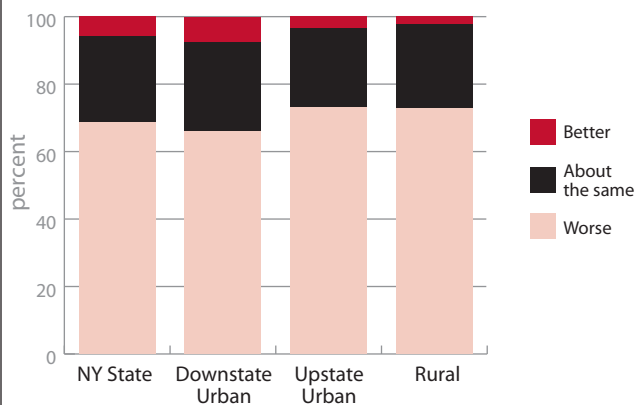
**Figure 45A:** New York State economy over the last year, 2007



**Table 45A:** New York State economy over the last year, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worsened	40.6%	37.1%	47.2%	46.3%
Stayed about the same	35.1	33.0	38.8	39.3
Improved	19.1	24.2	12.0	8.1

**Figure 45B:** New York State economy over the last year, 2008



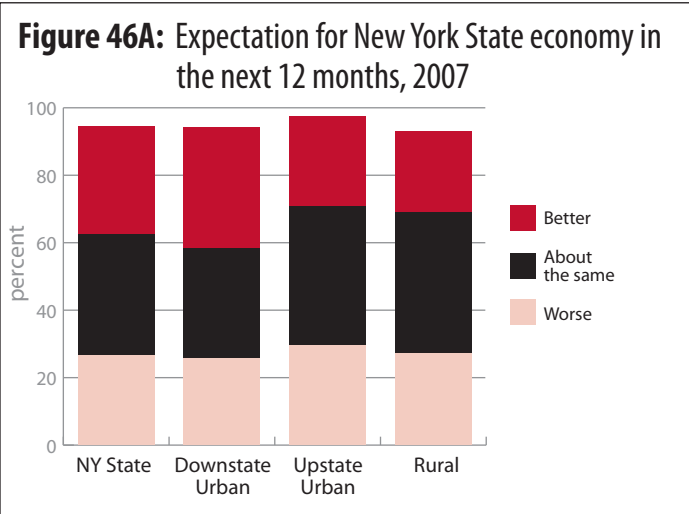
**Table 45B:** New York State economy over the last year, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	68.5%	66.2%	73.0%	72.9%
About the same	25.7	26.2	23.6	24.9
Better	5.8	7.7	3.4	2.2

In both 2007 and 2008, respondents in all three regions felt the state's economy had worsened over the previous year, but this sentiment was much more marked in 2008 than in 2007. In 2008, 73 percent of upstate urban respondents, 72.9 percent of rural respondents and 66.2 percent of downstate urban respondents felt that the NYS economy had worsened over the previous year. In 2007, those numbers were 47.2, 46.3 and 37.1, respectively. In 2008, very few respondents said the economy had improved, with rural respondents being the least likely to feel this way, at 2.2 percent.

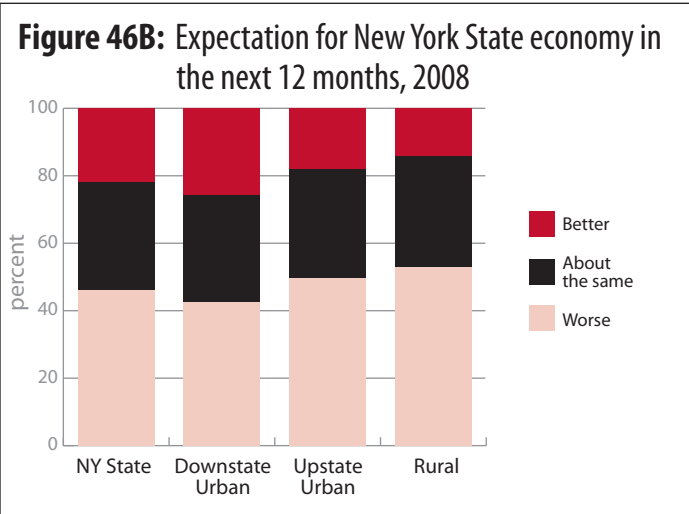
Question:

What about THE NEXT 12 MONTHS? Do you expect the economy in New York State as a whole, to get better, stay about the same, or get worse? (econfut)



**Table 46A:** Expectation for New York State economy in the next 12 months, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	26.5%	25.6%	29.6%	27.2%
About the same	36.0	32.7	41.2	41.9
Better	32.0	36.0	26.8	23.9



**Table 45B:** Expectation for New York State economy in the next 12 months, 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Worse	46.2%	42.6%	49.6%	53.1%
About the same	31.9	31.7	32.3	32.7
Better	21.9	25.7	18.1	14.3

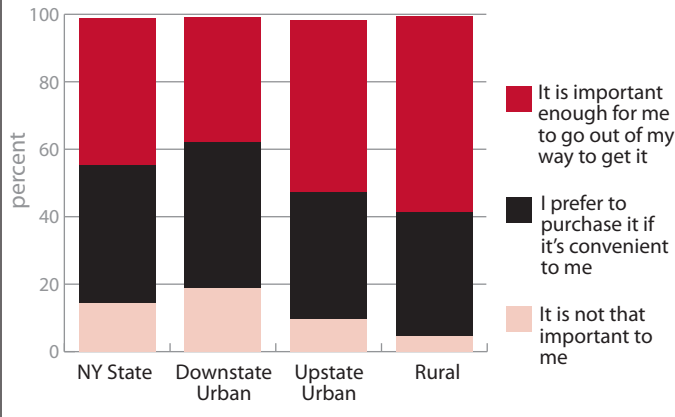
While about two-thirds of all respondents expected the state economy to stay about the same or get better when surveyed in 2007, by 2008 this number hovered around the 50 percent mark. In fact, by 2008, a significant proportion (in some cases more than half) of respondents reported that they expected the state economy to worsen over the next year. In 2007, only 25.6 percent of downstate urban respondents felt the economy would worsen in the next year, compared to 42.6 percent in 2008 – those numbers were 27.2 percent for rural respondents in 2007, 53.1 percent in 2008 and 29.6 for upstate urban respondents in 2007, 42.6 percent in 2008.

# Local Food & Agriculture\*

## Question:

Please tell me which of the following statements most accurately reflects your preference about locally-produced foods. (DHQ1)

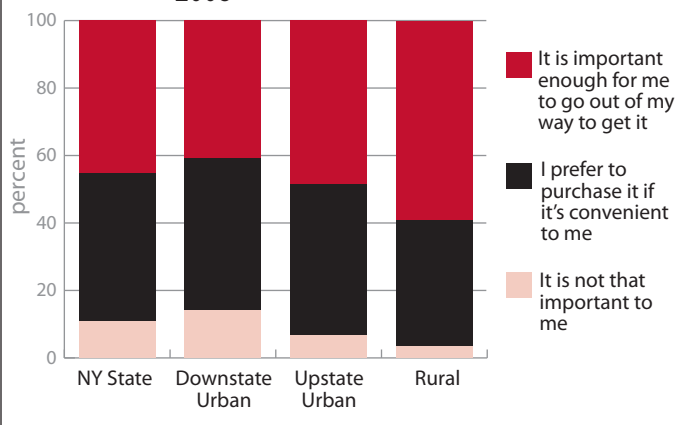
**Figure 47A:** Importance of buying locally produced food, 2007



**Table 47A:** Importance of buying locally produced food, 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
It is not that important to me	14.5%	18.8%	9.6%	4.6%
I prefer to purchase it if it is convenient to me	40.9	43.4	37.6	36.6
It is important enough for me to go out of my way to get it	43.4	36.8	51.2	58.3

**Figure 47B:** Importance of buying locally produced food, 2008



**Table 47B:** Importance of buying locally produced food, 2008

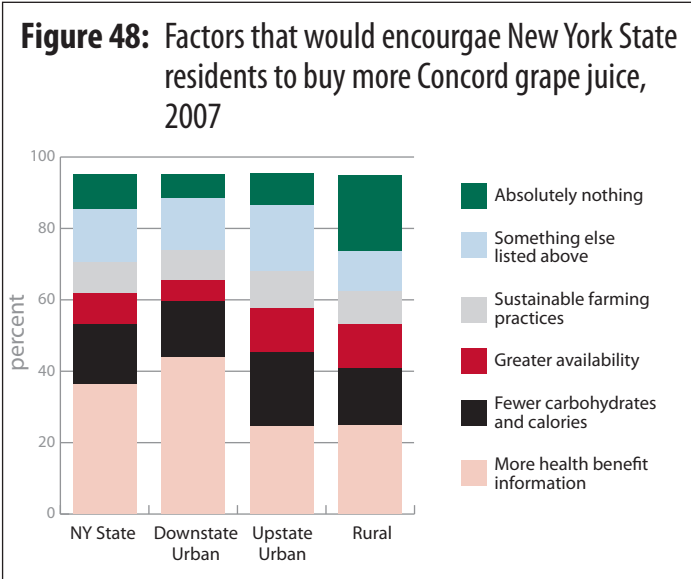
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
It is not that important to me	10.8%	14.2%	6.8%	3.4%
I prefer to purchase it if it is convenient to me	44.1	44.8	44.5	37.6
It is important enough for me to go out of my way to get it	45.1	41.0	48.7	58.9

A majority of rural respondents felt that locally-produced foods were important enough that they would go out of their way to purchase them (58.3 percent in 2007 and 58.9 percent in 2008). About half of upstate urbanites felt similarly (51.2 percent in 2007 and 48.7 percent in 2008). Downstate urbanites were less likely to go out of their way to buy locally produced food (36.8 percent in 2007 and 41 percent in 2008), but 43 to 45 percent indicated that they would purchase such food if it were convenient. Among downstate urban respondents, between 14 and 18.8 percent said buying local isn't that important to them, compared to about 6.8 to 9.6 percent upstate urban and 4.6 to 10.8 percent rural.

\*See pages 65-67 in the Appendix for CaRDI publications on this topic. Duncan Hilchey and Joe Francis submitted questions DHQ1-DHQ3, and Mary Jo Dudley submitted question MJQ4.

Question:

The Concord grape juice industry in New York (including farmers and processors) is interested in learning more about ways to improve its products. Which ONE of the following would most encourage you to purchase more Concord grape juice? (DHQ2)



**Table 48:** Factors that would encourage New York State residents to buy more Concord grape juice, 2007

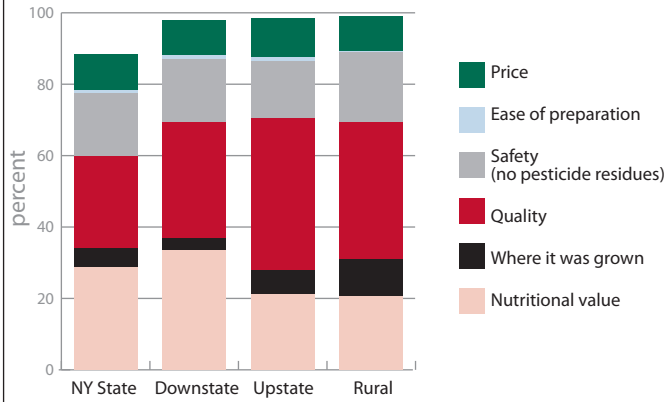
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
More health benefit information	36.3%	43.9%	24.4%	24.8%
Fewer carbohydrates and calories	16.9	15.7	20.8	16.2
Greater availability	8.5	6.1	12.4	12.1
Sustainable farming practices	8.9	8.4	10.4	9.4
Other (not listed) factors	14.7	14.5	18.4	11.0
Absolutely nothing	9.7	6.6	9.2	21.5

Respondents across all three geographic groups said that having more health information would be the most important factor to encourage them to buy more Concord grape juice, with 43.9 percent of downstate urban respondents choosing this option, 24.8 percent of rural respondents and 24.4 percent of upstate urban respondents. Other factors that respondents said might encourage more purchasing included fewer carbohydrates and calories and greater availability. But a number of respondents (21.5 percent rural, 9.2 percent upstate urban and 6.6. percent downstate urban), said there were no factors that would cause them to purchase more juice.

## Question:

Which of the following is your most important consideration in buying fruits and vegetables? (DHQ3)

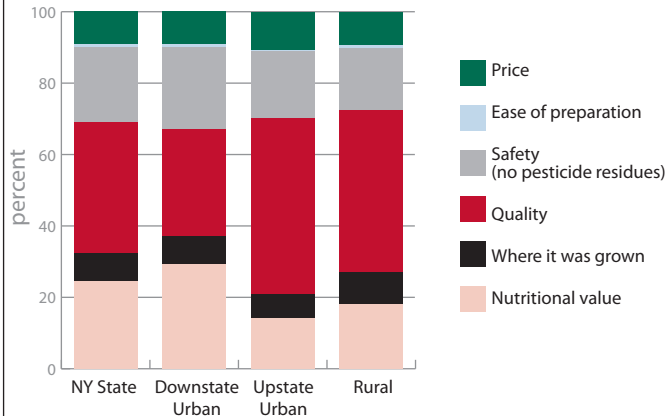
**Figure 49A:** Most important consideration in buying fruits and vegetables? 2007



**Table 49A:** Most important consideration in buying fruits and vegetables? 2007

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Nutritional value	28.7%	33.5%	21.2%	20.6%
Where it was grown	5.5	3.3	6.8	10.3
Quality	25.6	32.5	42.4	38.6
Safety (no pesticide residues)	17.7	17.8	16.0	19.5
Ease of preparation	0.9	1.0	1.2	0.2
Price	10.0	9.9	10.8	9.9

**Figure 49B:** Most important consideration in buying fruits and vegetables? 2008



**Table 49A:** Most important consideration in buying fruits and vegetables? 2008

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Nutritional value	24.6%	29.4%	14.1%	18.0%
Where it was grown	7.6	7.6	6.8	9.1
Quality	36.7	30.1	49.1	45.1
Safety (no pesticide residues)	21.1	22.8	18.8	17.6
Ease of preparation	1.0	1.0	0.4	0.7
Price	9.0	9.1	10.7	9.5

Nutritional value, quality, and safety were found to be the most important considerations for people in all three geographic groups when buying fruits and vegetables. Downstate urban respondents were almost equally concerned with nutritional value and quality. Upstate urban and rural respondents looked first for quality and then for nutritional value. Safety (no pesticide residue) was the third most important consideration for the entire population.

Question:

Generally speaking, how interested are you in agriculture and/or farm related issues and topics? (MJQ4)

Figure 50: How interested are you in agriculture and/or farm related issues and topics? 2008

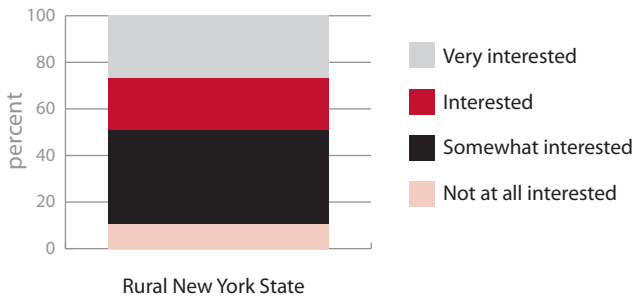


Table 50: How interested are you in agriculture and/or farm related issues and topics? 2008

	Rural NYS
Not at all interested	10.7%
Somewhat interested	40.3
Interested	22.3
Very Interested	26.7

While only 10.7 percent of rural New Yorkers reported being “not at all interested” in agriculture and/or farm related issues and topics, about 40 percent of rural New Yorkers reported that they were “somewhat interested”. Another 22.3 percent indicated being “interested”, while 26.7 percent reported being “very interested.”

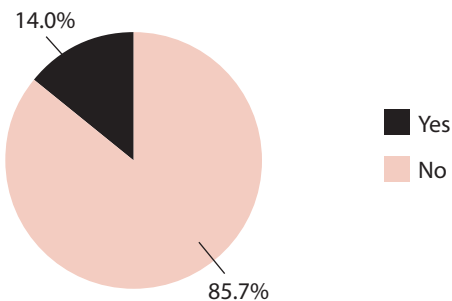


## Health Care & Schools\*

### Question:

First, was there a time in the past twelve months when YOU needed to see a doctor but could not? (doctor) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 51:** Has there been a time in the past 12 months when you needed but couldn't see a doctor? 2007

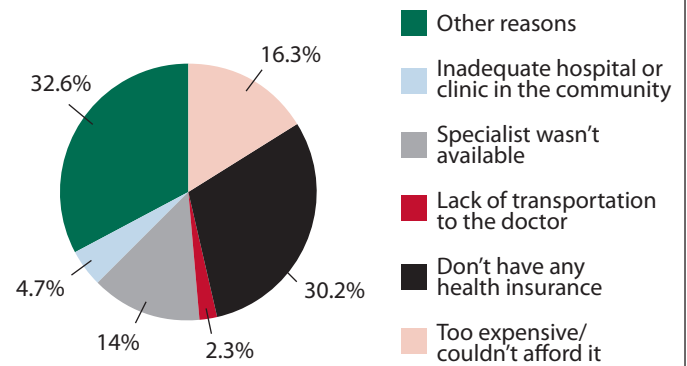


The majority (85.7 percent) of rural respondents were able to see a doctor in the past 12 months when they needed to. About 14 percent reported not being able to see a doctor when they needed to.

### Question:

Why could you not see a doctor? Of the reasons below, which one most closely matches your reason for not seeing a doctor when you needed to? (whynodoc) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 52:** Why could you not see a doctor? 2007



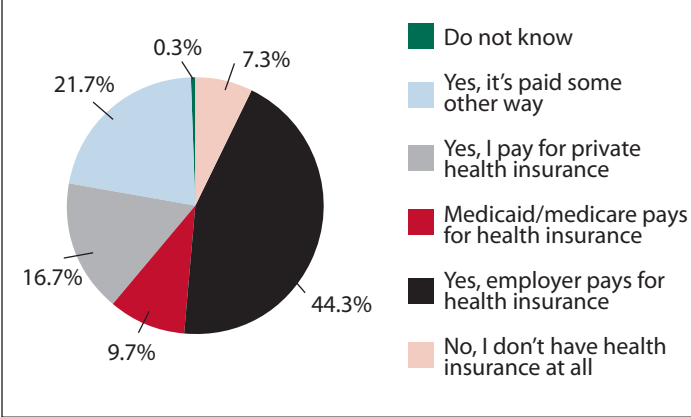
For the rural respondents who could not see a doctor, 30.2 percent said it was because they had no health insurance. Another 16.3 percent said they couldn't afford the doctor's visit, while 14 percent said a specialist wasn't available. For 32.6 percent of the people responding, other reasons than those listed kept them from seeing a doctor.

\*See pages 68-70 in the Appendix for CaRDI publications on this topic. John Sipple submitted questions JSQ1-JSQ8.

Question:

Do you currently have health insurance, and if yes, who pays for it? (payhlth)

**Figure 53:** Do you currently have health insurance, and if yes, who pays for it? 2007

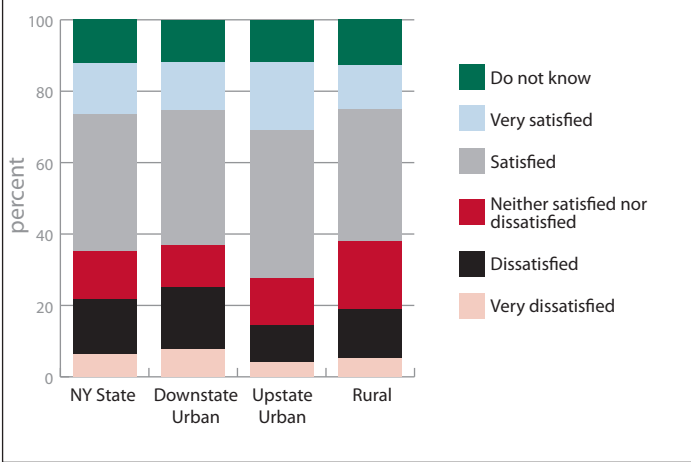


Employers paid for health insurance for 44.3 percent of rural respondents, with another 21.7 having their insurance paid for in some other way. 16.7 percent of rural respondents paying for insurance themselves and 7.3 percent of respondents reported they had no health insurance.

Question:

How satisfied are you with the primary health care services/opportunities available to children in your community? (JSQ1)

**Figure 54:** Satisfaction with the primary health care services for children, 2007



**Table 54:** Satisfaction with the primary healthcare services for children, 2007

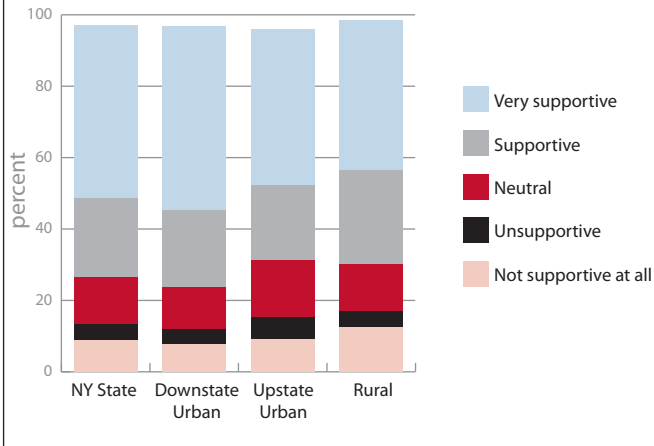
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Very dissatisfied	6.4%	7.6%	4.0%	5.3%
Dissatisfied	15.2	17.5	10.4	13.6
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	13.6	11.7	13.2	19.1
Satisfied	38.5	37.8	41.6	37.1
Very satisfied	14.3	13.5	18.8	12.3

Overall, a majority of respondents were either satisfied or very satisfied with the primary health care services and opportunities available to children in their communities. Upstate urban respondents were the most satisfied (60.4 percent responded satisfied or very satisfied), while rural respondents were less satisfied (49.4 percent responded satisfied or very satisfied). Among downstate urban respondents, 52.3 percent said they were satisfied or very satisfied, but another 25.1 percent said they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied.

## Question:

If primary health care services were available in a clinic inside your local public school, on a scale of 1 to 5 (with 1 being not supportive and 5 being very supportive) would you support the use of it for children in your community? (JSQ2)

**Figure 55: Support clinic in school, 2007**



**Table 55: Support clinic in school, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Not supportive at all	8.8%	7.6%	9.2%	12.5%
Unsupportive	4.6	4.3	6.0	4.4
Neutral	12.9	11.7	16.0	13.4
Supportive	22.4	21.6	21.2	26.1
Very supportive	48.3	51.8	43.6	42.1

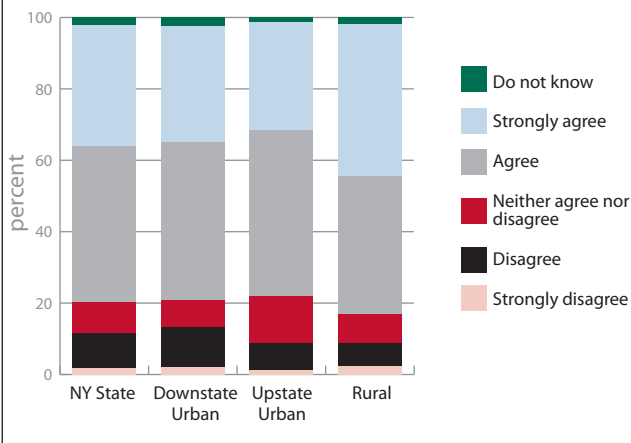
New Yorkers were generally in favor of primary health care services made available in a clinic inside their local public school. Downstate urban respondents were most supportive of this concept, followed closely by rural respondents and upstate urban respondents.

## Question:

How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements?

*Local public schools are a vital center for community activity. (JSQ3@a)*

**Figure 56: Local public schools are vital for community activity, 2007**



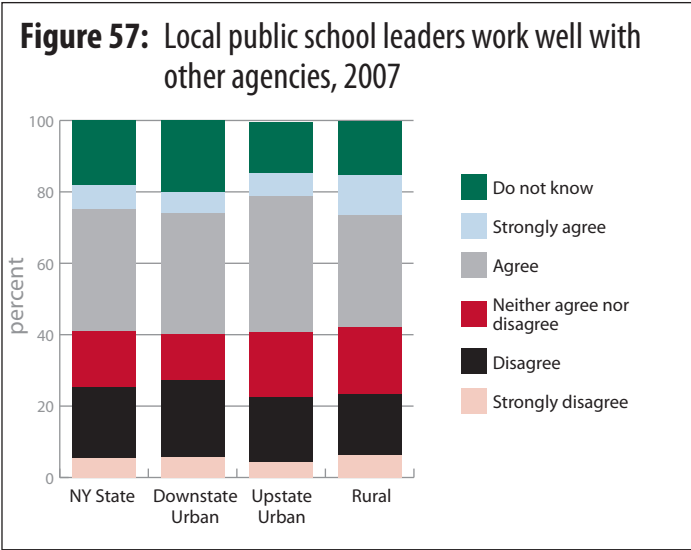
**Table 56: Local public schools are vital for community activity, 2007**

	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly disagree	1.9%	2.0%	1.2%	2.4%
Disagree	9.6	11.4	7.6	6.4
Neither agree nor disagree	8.8	7.4	13.2	8.1
Agree	43.5	44.2	46.4	38.6
Strongly agree	33.8	32.5	30.4	42.8
Do not know	2.3	2.5	1.2	1.8

The majority of respondents across the state agreed that public schools are a vital center for community activity. Rural respondents were most likely to be in agreement with the statement (81.4 percent) followed by 76.8 percent of upstate urban respondents and 76.7 percent of downstate urban respondents.

Question:

*My local public school and school district leaders effectively partner or collaborate with other agencies in my community (for example, social service, economic development, healthcare) (JSQ3@b)*



**Table 57:** Local public school leaders work well with other agencies, 2007

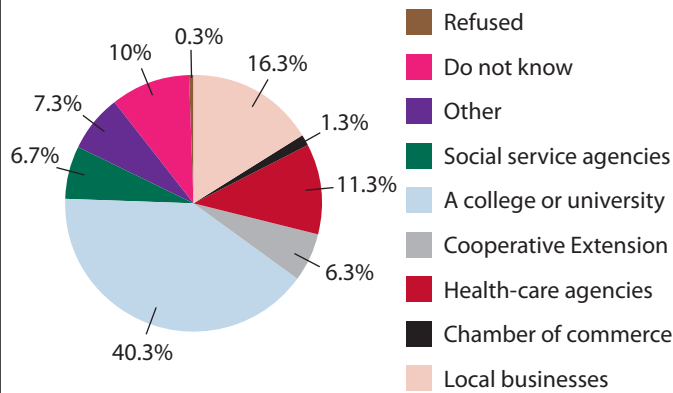
	NY State	Downstate Urban	Upstate Urban	Rural
Strongly disagree	5.6%	5.8%	4.4%	6.4%
Disagree	19.9	21.3	18.0	16.9
Neither agree nor disagree	15.6	12.9	18.4	18.9
Agree	34.1	34.0	38.0	31.1
Strongly agree	6.8	5.8	6.4	11.4
Do not know	18.0	20.1	14.4	15.1

Across all respondent groups, more than 40 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their public school leaders work well with other agencies (44.4 percent upstate urban, 42.5 percent rural and 40.9 percent downstate urban). But more than a quarter of downstate urban respondents (27.1 percent) said they disagreed or strongly disagreed with the statement.

### Question:

With whom would you most like to see your local school district form a partnership? (JSQ4) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 58:** With whom should local school district form a partnership most? 2007

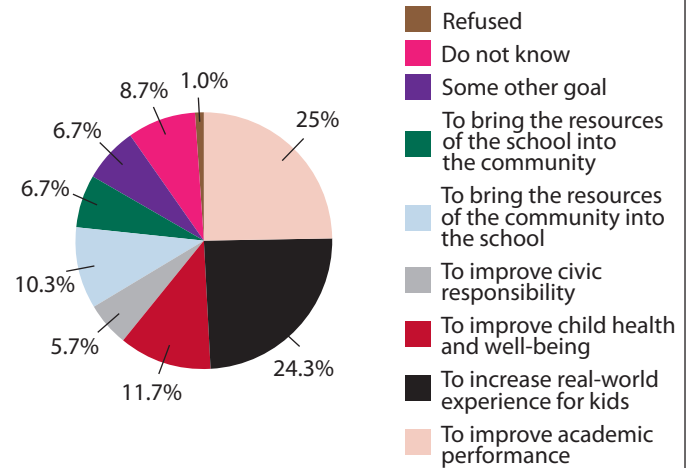


Rural respondents felt that a partnership with a college or university would be the most beneficial for their local school district (40.3 percent) followed by partnerships with local businesses (16.3 percent) and health-care agencies (11.3 percent).

### Question:

What should be primary goal for such a partnership? (JSQ5) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 59:** Primary goal of partnership, 2007

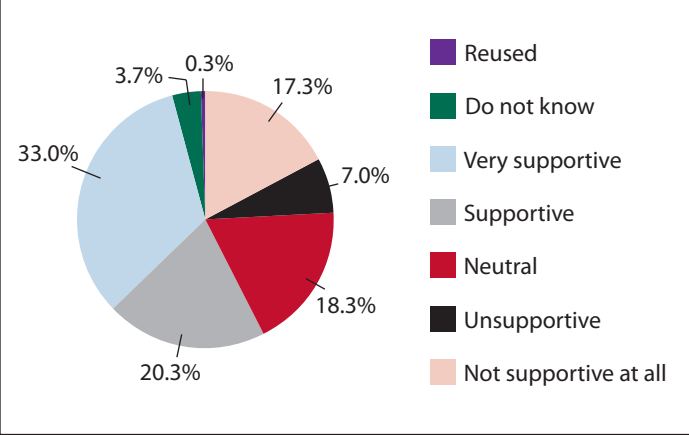


Rural respondents said the primary goal for a partnership between a school and other organizations should be improving academic performance (25 percent) followed closely by increasing real-world experiences for kids (24.3 percent). Improving child health and well-being and bringing the resources of the community to school were other commonly cited goals.

Question:

If it resulted in an increase in academic and after-school opportunities, how much would you support the merging of your local school with that of a school in a neighboring town? (JSQ6) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

Figure 60: Support merging schools, 2007

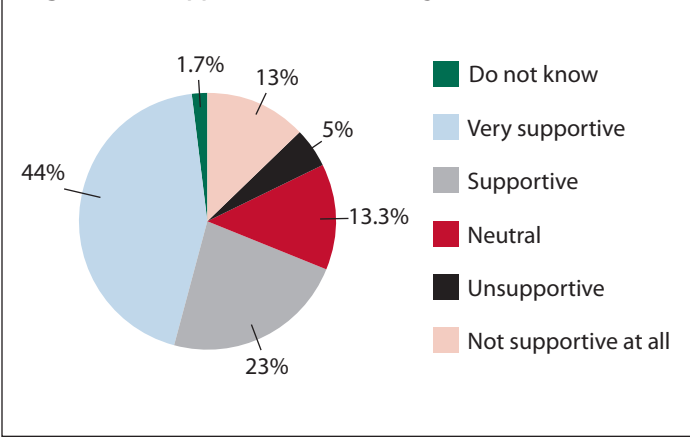


About a third of rural respondents were “very supportive” of merging their local school with a school in a neighboring town, if it would result in an increase in academic and after-school opportunities (33 percent). Another 20.3 percent said they would be supportive, while 24.3 percent said they would be not supportive at all or unsupportive.

Question:

Some schools are offering primary health care services to children in school. On a scale of 1 to 5, how supportive are you of this? (JSQ7) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

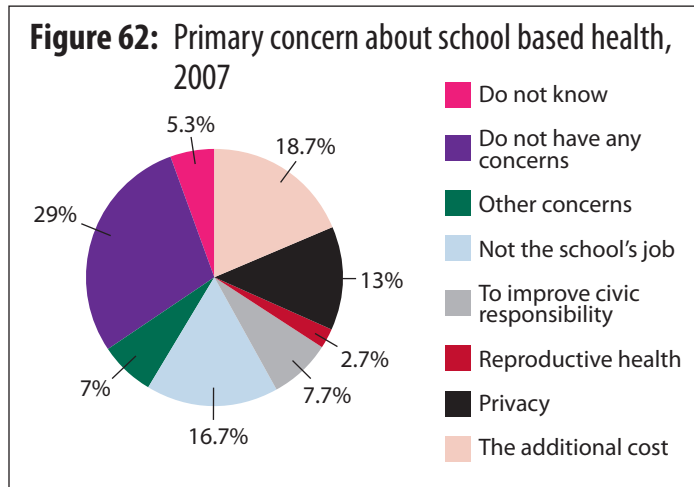
Figure 61: Support schools offering health care, 2007



Many rural respondents were very supportive of offering primary health care services to children in school (44 percent). Another 23 percent were supportive and 18 percent said they were unsupportive or not supportive at all.

**Question:**

Whether or not you support the idea in general, what is your primary concern about school-based health clinics? (JSQ8) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)



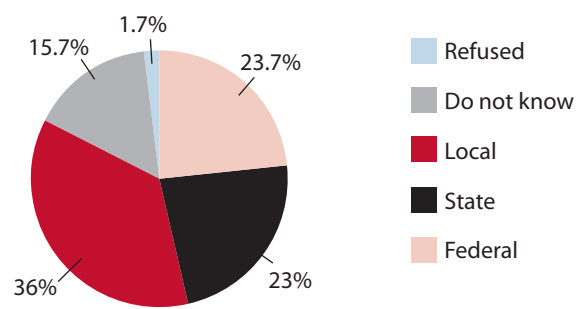
Almost a third of rural respondents said they had no concerns about school-based health clinics (29 percent), while others said they worried about additional costs (18.7 percent) or thought that health clinics were not the school's responsibility (16.7 percent).

# Government & Taxes\*

## Question:

From which level of government do you feel you get the most for your money: federal, state or local? (valtax)  
(This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 63:** From which tax do you get the most value back? 2007

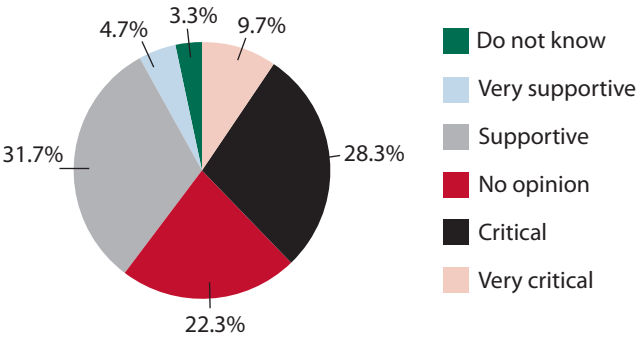


Rural respondents felt they received the most for their money from their local government (36 percent), followed by federal (23.7 percent) and state government (23 percent).

## Question:

How would you describe your own opinion regarding you local government’s mix of taxes and services? Would you say you are... (suptax) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 64:** How supportive are you of local government taxes and the services they provide? 2007



Opinions were split on the question of local government services. A similar proportion of rural respondents said they were supportive (31.7 percent) and critical (28.3 percent) of their local government’s mix of taxes and services. Respondents were twice as likely to be “very critical” (9.7 percent) as “very supportive” (4.7 percent), however. More than a fifth of respondents (22.3 percent) had no opinion.

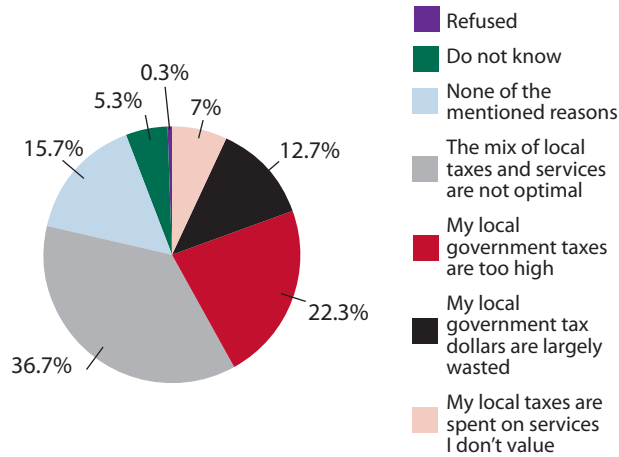
\*See page 71 in the Appendix for a CaRDI publication on this topic.



## Question:

If you are at all critical about your local government's mix of taxes and services, please tell me which of the following statements most closely reflects your opinion? (whytax) (This question was asked only of rural respondents)

**Figure 65:** If critical of local taxes % services, why? 2007



For respondents critical of their local government's mix of taxes and services, the most common reason given was that they did not feel that the mix was optimal (36.7 percent). Another 22.3 percent said that local taxes are too high, and 12.7 percent indicated that they felt local tax dollars are largely wasted.

# Appendix



# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 21/SEPTEMBER 2008

## Attitudes Toward Rural Community Life in New York State

By Robin M. Blakely & David L. Brown (Cornell University)

### In an increasingly urban nation, why are attitudes about rural life important?

Public attitudes affect public policy. When positive attitudes toward rural people and communities are prevalent, policies fostering rural life are more likely to be on the public agenda and supported. However, given that the U.S. is about 80% urban, why should this majority care about rural places and people? For starters, rural areas contain most of our nation's land, water and natural resources, energy generation facilities, physical infrastructure and recreation destinations. Most of our nation's food, fiber and energy sectors are located in rural areas. And, while rural people only comprise about 20% of the US population, this still constitutes a sizeable "minority" and a significant force in state and national elections.

Attitudes also influence our private choices. How people feel about rural versus urban areas may be associated with their decisions about where to live and work. Collectively, these individual attitudes may influence migration patterns which affect land use, community character, and economic development patterns. Where people live has a significant impact on their opportunities and life chances, as well as on their personal identities.

### Research on attitudes about rural life

In a recent study, we examined people's perceptions about particular aspects of rural and urban life in New York State in 2008. This issue has not been examined for at least a decade. Previous research shows that rural Americans and rural areas are viewed as worthy of attention in public policy (Kellogg, 2001, Roper Association, 1992\*). In Pennsylvania, Willets et al. (1990) found that regardless of where people lived (urban, suburban, or rural), their attitudes were comprised of both pro-rural and anti-urban responses, a pairing which can be considered a critique of urban life.

Our study revisits the Pennsylvania work. We surveyed 1,100 New Yorkers in 2008 via the annual Empire State Poll telephone survey conducted by Cornell University. Respondents were presented with a set of ten statements that elicited the clearest pro-rural, anti-urban, and anti-rural sentiments in the previous Pennsylvania research and asked whether they agreed or disagreed with the statements. Survey respondents were grouped according to residential place type – upstate urban, downstate urban, or rural.

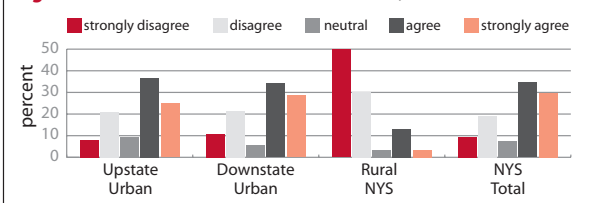
### What are the attitudes in NYS? Do they vary depending upon where one lives?

We find that while the general attitudes in NYS are similar to those found in Pennsylvania two decades ago, NYS respondents were often divided depending on the specific sentiment being expressed. Agreeing with one pro-rural sentiment, usually, but not always, meant that a respondent will

agree with other pro-rural sentiments. In fact, respondents often agreed with both pro-rural and anti-rural sentiments (especially those reflecting material conditions), indicating that overall pro-rural attitudes are complex and may even be coupled with realistic ideas about rural deficits.

In addition, responses are consistent across residential place types for some attitudes but not for others. For example, there is strong agreement across New York that "neighborliness and friendliness are more characteristic of rural areas." However, rural New Yorkers tend to disagree (and disagree strongly!) that "because rural life is closer to nature, it is more wholesome", while urban New Yorkers tend to agree with this statement (see Figure 1). In general, rural respondents were more likely to differ from other New Yorkers in their attitudes about rural areas. They often take a slightly more negative (and perhaps realistic) view of the material aspects of rural life, such as limited economic opportunities, than do their urban counterparts. On the other hand, rural respondents were the most likely to disagree with the anti-rural sentiment, "Rural life is monotonous and boring," suggesting that rural residents value the quality of life aspects of rural living regardless of the material conditions.

**Figure 1: Because Rural Life is Closer to Nature, It is More Wholesome**



Source: 2008 Empire State Poll, Cornell University.

### Conclusions

We find that pro-rural and anti-urban attitudes are strong in NYS despite high levels of urbanization, but these attitudes are more complex than might appear from an overall general or "global" preference question. More global attitudes towards rural or urban life can mask differences across specific questions that tap particular dimensions of the broader attitude. This suggests that these global attitude measures should be avoided in policy prescriptions and future research.

While people are rather consistent in their attitudes, with those who hold pro-rural attitudes also tending to hold anti-urban attitudes, many people appear to hold both pro- and anti-rural attitudes at the same time. This finding suggests that people have a realistic idea about limited rural opportunities while still holding positive sentiments about other aspects of rural life. Since attitudes toward rural people and communities can affect the public policy process, thoughtful research and policymaking will examine who thinks what about rural people and places, and avoid over-generalizing. ♦

\* All citations posted on the CaRDI website with this issue.



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# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 6/JUNE 2007

## What does "Community" mean to New Yorkers?

By **Robin M. Blakely** & **David L. Brown**, Cornell University

**H**ow we define our community may not just affect the way we view it and our place in society, but our definition can also influence the actions we take personally, politically, and otherwise to shape our community. "Community" has many connotations, most of them positive. A "sense" of community, a bond we share with others, the place we live, a place we identify with in some important way, and a place that may in turn identify us.

Where do New Yorkers consider their "community" to be? We thought we would start with the idea that community often (but not always) has something to do with place and/or geography. We examine data collected on the 2007 Empire State Poll, a telephone survey of 400 downstate (Rockland County and below), 400 upstate, and 300 rural New Yorkers ("rural" is defined here as areas with population densities of less than 500 persons per square mile).

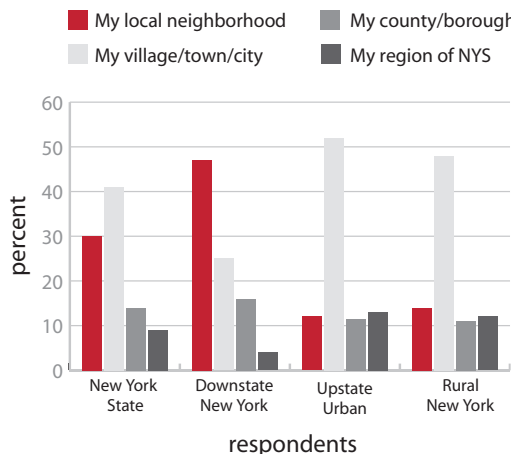
When asked what level of geography best described their definition of community, 42% of all NYS respondents said their

village/city/town best fit their idea of community, followed by 30% identifying their local neighborhood. However, when we analyze and compare the responses by downstate, upstate urban, and rural NY respondents, we see dramatically different stories. Almost half (48%) of downstate New Yorkers, the vast majority of them urban dwellers, identify their local neighborhood as their "community". Only 25% of them identify their town/village/city, and only 16% identify their county or borough. Only a handful (4%) of downstaters define their community by their region of the state. When these results are compared with Upstate urban residents (which includes places like Syracuse, Buffalo, Albany and the suburbs which have at least 500 persons per square mile), the contrast is rather striking. While almost half of downstate residents identified their neighborhood as their community, only 13% of upstate urban dwellers did so. The majority (53%) of urban upstaters identified their village/town/city. Only 12% and 14% defined their communities as their county or region of NYS, respectively.

The profile of responses from rural New Yorkers, the vast majority of whom live in upstate New York, was remarkably similar to that of the upstate urban respondents. Slightly more rural New Yorkers (58%) named their village or town as best describing their community, with their local neighborhood, county, or region of the state receiving roughly equal responses (a range of 12-14%).

Perhaps in very dense urban areas such as downstate NYS, the town or city as a whole is seen as too big, socially and geographically distant from the individual, and therefore somewhat removed from these urban dwellers' sense of community. Perhaps in these cases people tend to identify with what is physically close, such as the neighborhood. Conversely, in rural areas, the idea of a "neighborhood" often covers miles and miles of open space, making the connection to rural residents' village or town more meaningful and important, a centralized place where geographically isolated people can come together for meetings and civic functions, to build "community" around shared experiences. The interesting finding here is that upstate urban New Yorkers are much more similar to their rural counterparts than to their downstate urban ones. These findings are important because the place where local community action occurs may also differ between upstate and downstate, and this may suggest different targets for community based public policy.

**Figure 1:** When you refer to your community, what geographic area best describes what you mean?



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# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 7/JULY 2007

## Community Issues in New York State: What's Important?

By **Robin M. Blakely**, Cornell University

Community issues may shape the way we vote, our choice of where to live and work, and the way we live our daily lives. What issues are most important in the communities we live in? Using data from the 2007 Empire State Poll and the special rural survey (Survey Research Institute & the Community & Rural Development Institute at Cornell University), we provide a picture of New Yorkers' opinions about community issues that varies dramatically depending on where people live.

Among respondents who answered the question "In your opinion, what do you think is the SINGLE most important issue facing your community as a whole?", taxes, crime, education, and employment were cited most frequently. The answer to this question may partly depend on how we *define* our community (as we discussed in last month's issue (Issue 6/June 2007), and that can depend on where we live.

Upstate and downstate urbanites contrast significantly in the top community issue they identify. For example, 32% of upstate urban respondents identify taxes as the single most important issue facing their community (upstate urban dwellers are more likely to identify their village/town/city as their community), whereas only 9% of downstate urban residents do so (who are more likely to identify their local neighborhood as their community). Crime is cited most frequently among downstate urban respondents (22%), whereas 9% identify land development and 8.5% identify education as the top issue. While 8% of downstate urbanites identify housing as the most important issue in their communities, their upstate counterparts barely mention it. Upstate urban respondents are likely to identify employment (12%), crime (9%), economic growth (9%), and local

government (7%) as the most important issue for their communities.

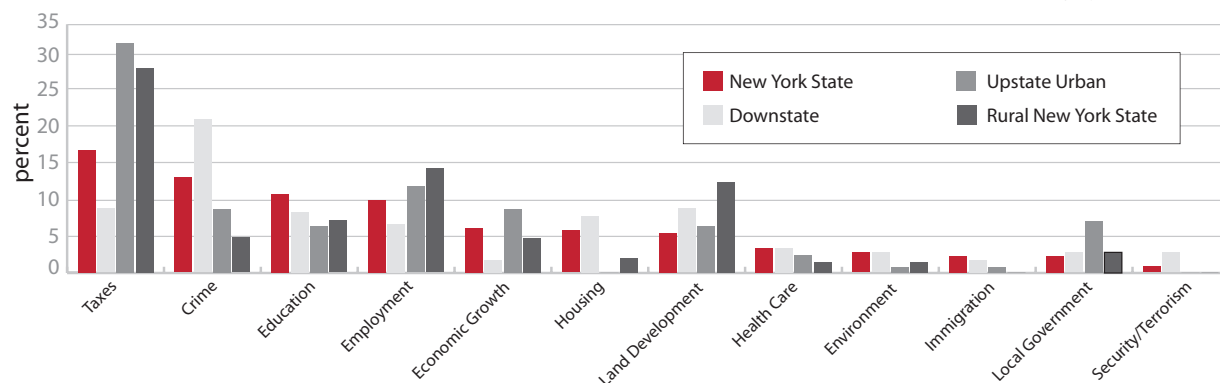
Rural New Yorkers are more like their upstate urban counterparts in the way that they describe their community (their village/town/city), and they identify top community issues similarly, to a point. As in upstate urban areas, taxes are viewed as important in rural communities, with 29% of rural respondents ranking this issue as the most critical. Likewise, employment is identified by the second largest group of rural respondents (15%). However, some interesting differences in attitudes between upstate urban and rural respondents exist. Land development is mentioned twice as often by rural residents as it is by upstate urban respondents (13% vs. 6.5%) as being the most important issue in their communities, while crime is cited only about half as much (5% vs. 9%).

What might be surprising to some is that issues such as health care, the environment, and immigration are cited so infrequently by respondents. This may be because the survey question asks respondents to identify the *single* most important issue, rather than asking for a ranking of *all* the issues listed here. It is important not to interpret these results as meaning, for example, that health care is ranked 8th in importance overall for New Yorkers. This is simply a reporting of the frequency at which issues were identified as the *most* important issue.

It is also important to keep in mind that the community issues New Yorkers identify as most important may actually be regional, national, and even global in nature. Local policies may have limited success in addressing these larger issues even though the impacts may be experienced most significantly at the local level. ♦

**Figure 1: What is the most important issue facing your community?**

\* Figures do not add to 100% due to an "other" category not shown here.



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll and Rural Survey (Survey Research Institute and the Community & Rural Development Institute, Cornell University)



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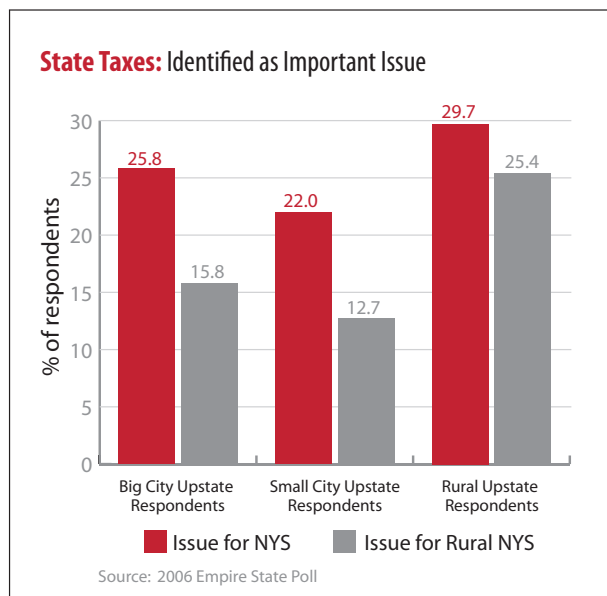
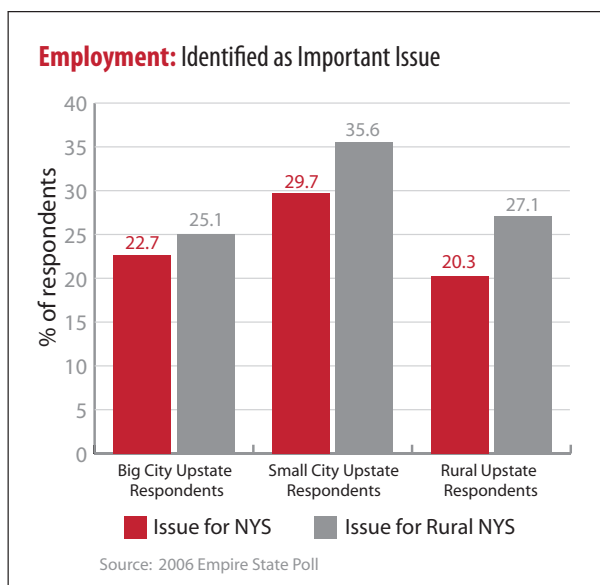
# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 2/FEBRUARY 2007

## What Issues Are Important to Upstate New Yorkers?

By Robin Blakely Community & Rural Development Institute, Cornell University

Upstate New Yorkers are frequently compared to their downstate counterparts, often revealing dramatic differences between the two. But upstate residents are certainly not all alike, socio-demographically and in their opinions and perceptions of important public policy issues. It is important to understand these differences because public policy needs to reflect and respond to geographical differences. Public support for policy depends not only on information and data regarding the social and economic situation, but also on general opinions and perceptions of issues.



Employment and state taxes were the two most important issues identified by respondents to Cornell University's annual Empire State Poll in February 2006. Interestingly, more respondents felt that employment was a bigger issue for rural NYS than for the state overall. For example, while about 30% of small city residents identified employment as the most important issue for the state as a whole, almost 36% felt it was the most important issue for rural areas in the state. This is true for all respondents, regardless of where they lived. State taxes, in contrast, were seen as a more important issue for the state as a whole than from rural areas. Even rural residents were more likely to identify state taxes as an important issue for the state (~30%), than for their own areas (25%). ♦



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This issue is available on-line at <http://rnyi.cornell.edu>.

# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 13/JANUARY 2008

## Are New Yorkers Satisfied with the Public Education in their Communities?

By Robin M. Blakely, and John W. Sipple, Cornell University

Public education is viewed by many people as fundamental to a democratic, civil, and productive society. Community support, public engagement, and adequate resources are seen as essential to the success of public education (Public Education Network). New Yorkers view education as one of the top issues facing their communities (see our July *Rural New York Minute* issue, #7). But how *satisfied* are New Yorkers with public education in their communities? Does this support vary across the state?

In the 2007 Empire State Poll, 1,100 New York residents were interviewed by telephone on a number of issues and topics. Respondents were asked: "Every community has good points and bad points about living within it. Thinking about availability, cost, quality, and any other considerations important to you, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with the public education in your community?" Overall, New Yorkers are relatively satisfied with public education in their communities, but this varies significantly by where people live.

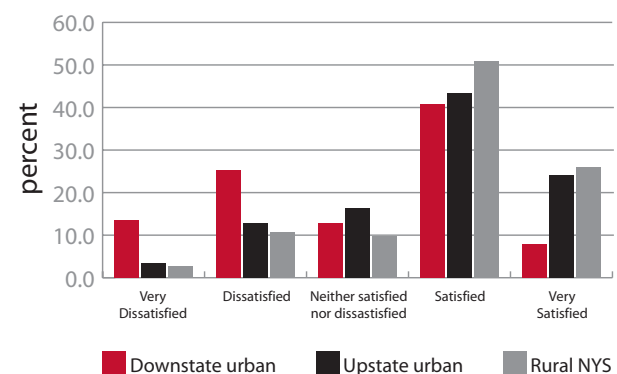
Almost half (49%) of downstate urban respondents report satisfaction (almost 8% are *very* satisfied with the public education in their communities), though almost 39% report being *dissatisfied* (with 13% being *very* dissatisfied). Rural New Yorkers, on the other hand, differ dramatically from their downstate urban counterparts. Almost 77% of rural New Yorkers interviewed report satisfaction with the public education in their communities (with one in four being *very* satisfied). Only about 12% of rural respondents reported dissatisfaction (less than 3% are *very* dissatisfied). Upstate Urban respondents fall somewhere in between downstate urbanites and rural New Yorkers. Just over 67% of upstate urban respondents report being satisfied with their communities' public education (24% are *very* satisfied), while 16% report being dissatisfied (just over 3% are *very* dissatisfied).

Why do citizens tend to report high or low levels of satisfaction? On the one hand, satisfaction with a public service may suggest a belief (based on firsthand information or simply reputation) that the school is providing a quality education program. On the other hand, reported levels of satisfaction may be more a reflection of contentment with the relative tax burden or quality of local leadership (school board and/or Superintendent), rather than a direct assessment of the quality of the educational program offered. If, for instance, current levels of taxation and investment in one's local public school are considered reasonable, then

overall satisfaction with the schools is often indicated. Conversely, in communities with relatively high school tax rates, research has documented that citizens often report higher levels of dissatisfaction. Moreover, researchers have used superintendent turnover and school budget failure as community-level indicators of satisfaction with their local school.\*

Despite all the attention on measuring academic growth and success, parents often judge the quality of local schools on the availability of extracurricular activities (e.g., band, sports, arts). Given the dramatic increase in academic requirements imposed by the New York State Board of Regents and the Federal government through the *No Child Left Behind* legislation, there is evidence that school districts are responding by either increasing tax rates to continue to support a full academic and extracurricular program, or are maintaining level tax efforts and cutting into some of these optional extras. Since satisfaction with local education is a mixture of local leadership, tax burden, educational programs, and extracurricular offerings, these responses are likely to affect satisfaction levels with community public education.

**Figure 1:** How satisfied are you with the public education in your community?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Survey Research Institute and CaRDI, Cornell University

\* References available on the CaRDI website



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# Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 3/MARCH 2007

## New Yorkers' Perceptions of Immigrants and Immigration

By Max J. Pfeffer & Pilar A. Parra

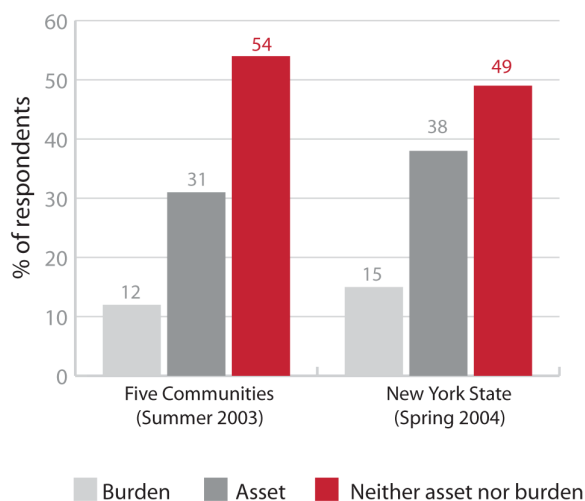
### The Consequences of Immigration are Experienced Most Intensely at the Local Level

At the same time that the issue of immigration and its impacts on American society is being hotly debated in the national political arena, the populations of many rural New York State communities are becoming more ethnically diverse. This trend has been most notable since the 1990s with the upsurge in Mexican migration. While there are certainly national, regional, and state-level impacts from increased immigration, the impacts and consequences of immigration are often experienced most intensely at the local community level. These diversifying communities are faced with a range of opportunities and challenges associated with this population change. In general, how do New Yorkers view these immigrants and immigration?

### How was the Study Conducted?

We asked community residents for their opinion about the presence of immigrants in their own communities. To do this, we focused on five upstate communities with a strong presence of Mexican immigrants, many of whom first came to the area to work as farmworkers. Two communities we studied are on the northern fringes of the New York City metropolitan area, and three are in more rural areas of northwestern New York. We convened seven focus groups with community residents who had no involvement in farmwork, and interviewed key informants and 1,250 randomly selected individuals living in these communities. We also added questions to Cornell University's annual Empire State Poll to assess how closely opinions in our five communities matched those of a statistically representative sample of New York State residents.

**Figure 1:** Perception of immigrants as an asset or burden, five New York communities and New York State



Source: Pfeffer & Parra, Department of Development Sociology, Cornell University

### New Yorkers' General Attitudes Towards Immigration and Immigrants

- A small proportion of community members considered immigrants a burden, and about one-third thought of them as an asset, but most people were ambivalent about immigrants. The Empire State Poll, a statewide survey of New Yorkers, explored the same question with similar results; about half of New Yorkers considered immigrants neither an asset nor a burden (see Figure 1).
- Contrasting opinions are reflected in the following comments by community residents:

*Communities react differently to the new immigrants; some are more welcoming and some are bad. This community has been more tolerant, but the welcomingness is not genuine—they make very clear where the line is in terms of how much you fit in.*

*The communities are just going to [have to] accept that it's going to be more diverse.*

*In this area there are persons very supportive of immigrant workers, and [they] try to help to get papers for the immigrant families working with them, and community members that perceive immigrants as the cause of community problems.*

- The most important concern regarding new immigrants in the five communities and in New York State as a whole is economic growth and job creation.
- Community members who have more education and are employed in managerial and professional occupations are more likely to consider immigrants an asset to their communities, often noting that immigrants take jobs that others in the community are unwilling to do:

*Immigrants bring cultural differences, which are good, bring in talent, and a lot of them are service people in jobs that others won't do, which is good.*

*The biggest challenge is for residents to understand why the immigrants are here, and that they are doing really good work that Americans, especially young Americans, are not willing to do.*

- On the other hand, some community residents view immigrants as competitors for their jobs, and noted the lack of adequate employment opportunities in the community:

*Immigrants' working for low wages makes it hard for Americans to get a job because immigrants would be hired first.*

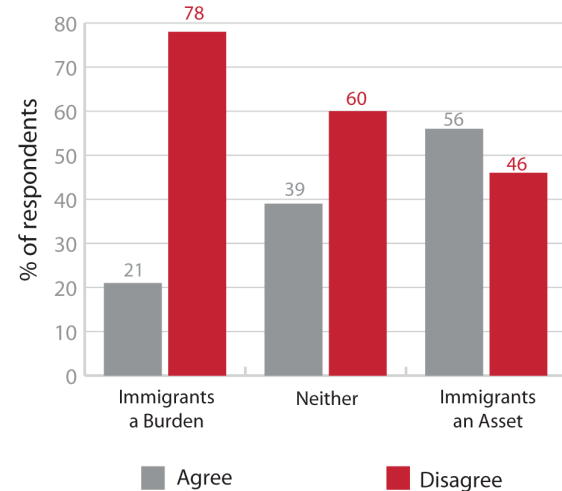
*There aren't enough jobs to go around right now, it keeps the salaries down because there is always someone there to take a job.*

- Overall, community residents are skeptical that immigrants bring businesses and jobs into their communities, but opinions about the economic impacts of immigration on the community are sometimes sharply divided. This varies depending on whether respondents view immigrants as a burden or an asset (see Figure 2).

## Conclusions and Policy Implications

Most people have little regular interaction with immigrants and are not aware of their needs or capabilities. Consequently, they do not have a clear opinion about the likely impacts of immigrants on their communities, nor do they have clear ideas about the potential role of immigrants in community development. Immigrants need more opportunities to develop social ties to other community residents, and civic organizations offer means of promoting such linkages. In particular, communities need to do more to encourage forms of civic engagement that include immigrants. Com-

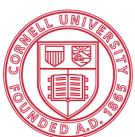
**Figure 2:** Belief that immigrants bring new businesses and jobs by perception of immigrants as an asset or burden, five New York communities, 2003



Source: Pfeffer & Parra, Department of Development Sociology, Cornell University

munity efforts to promote language training and certain types of technical training could play an important part in furthering the social and economic integration of immigrants into the community and provide employers with a more qualified workforce.

Will these new community residents be an asset or a burden to a community? This question will be answered by the types of actions communities take. Lack of active efforts to integrate immigrants into the social and economic life of the community will likely result in the development of a group that is poor and marginal to the community's mainstream. People who are not well integrated into community life typically have a low standard of living and do not contribute to the overall development of the community to the fullest extent possible. The integration of immigrants into community life can be part of a larger community development strategy that attracts employers who need workers with particular skills. The diversity introduced by immigrants can also be a community asset that helps to draw other workers who value more varied community life. The diversification of New York communities offers a new resource in community development that deserves careful attention.





# Research & Policy Brief Series

ISSUE NUMBER 23/NOVEMBER 2008

## Community Response to Immigrants in New Destinations\*

by **Max J. Pfeffer** and **Pilar A. Parra**, Cornell University

### What is the Issue?

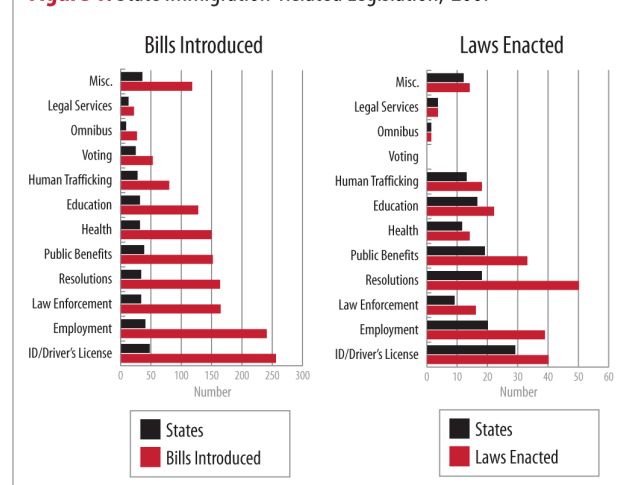
Immigration brings a variety of challenges to local communities. These challenges are often articulated in national immigration policy debates, but the consequences of immigration are most intensely experienced at the local level. Even the best conceived national level policies cannot deal with the diverse needs of communities attempting to better integrate immigrants into local social and economic life (Pfeffer 2008).

In new destination areas with a small and relatively new immigrant community, assistance provided by the immigrants' own ethnic community is more limited, and conditions in the host community are more consequential for immigrant integration (Pfeffer and Parra 2008; 2004). But opportunities to satisfy these needs can vary considerably depending on the local context. Localities may differ in the receptivity of the host community and the degree of competition between immigrants and local residents for housing, employment and other resources.

### State and Local Response to Immigration

In response to the continued rapid growth of the unauthorized population in recent decades and the failure of federal policies to effectively regulate such immigration, many state and local governments have recently begun to develop their own immigration policies. In 2007, state legislatures nationwide introduced more than 1,500 immigration-related bills on education, health, access to public benefits, law enforcement, employment and personal identification among other areas (as a result, 240 laws were enacted across 46 states - see Figure 1).

**Figure 1: State Immigration-Related Legislation, 2007**



Source: National Conference of State Legislatures 2008

In addition to state legislation, in recent years localities (i.e. counties, towns and villages) were active in proposing restrictive ordinances. Some observers claim that local ordinances are often more restrictive than state legislation (Broader 2007). For example, a large number of the proposed ordinances attempted to regulate the employment of unauthorized workers or relations between landlords and undocumented immigrants (see Table 1). Many of these ordinances also empowered local police to work with immigration authorities and mandated English as the locality's official language. As indicated in Table 1, only a small number of the identified local ordinances (14%) were supportive of immigrants.

**Table 1: Proposed Ordinances Specifically Regulating Immigrants or Relations with Immigrants Since 2006**

Content of Ordinance	Ordinance	
	Restrictive	Supportive
Employer Sanctions	45	-
Sanctions Against Landlords	31	-
English as Official Language	28	-
Police Support Immigration Authorities	25	5
Restrictions on Day Labor	9	-
Other	7	18
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>23</b>

Source: Web Search by Pilar A. Parra and Michelle Leveillee, April 2008

The largest numbers of restrictive local ordinances were in the South and Northeast. These ordinances have been proposed by many communities that until recently have not been concerned with immigration. But with the dispersal of immigrants across the American landscape, immigration has become a salient issue outside the immigrant gateway cities in small town America (Lichter and Johnson 2006; Capps et al., 2003; Fix and Passel 2001; Foner 2001; Kraly and Miyares 2001; Duchon and Murphy 2001). Many of the proposed local ordinances have focused explicitly on unauthorized immigrants, e.g. sanctions against employers who hire unauthorized workers or landlords who rent to unauthorized immigrants.

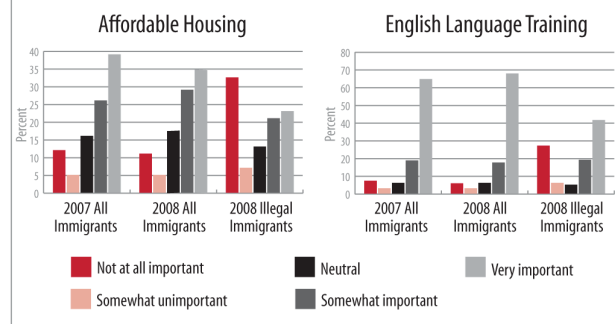
### The Case in New York State

New York is an interesting state in which to gauge the opinions of people living outside large centers of immigration like the New York City metropolitan area. Each year Cornell University fields the Empire State Poll, surveying 1,100 people across the state, and in recent years the poll has included a series of questions about immigration. The poll included several questions relevant to the questions of local support for immigrants: 1) If immigrants settled in your community, how important is it for the city or township you live in to help immigrants find affordable housing? 2) If immigrants settled in your community, how important is it for the city or township you live in to provide English language training for immigrants? 3) If immigrants without immigration documents, or illegal immigrants, settled in your community, how important is it for the city or township you live in

to help these immigrants find affordable housing? 4) If immigrants without immigration documents, or illegal immigrants, settled in your community, how important is it for the city or township you live in to provide English language training for these immigrants?

Between 2007 and 2008 there was little change in New Yorkers' opinions about their city or town providing assistance to immigrants in finding affordable housing or learning English (see Figure 2). Almost two-thirds of survey respondents said it was important for localities to provide immigrants with assistance in finding affordable housing. By 2008, 9 out of 10 respondents thought that their city or town should provide English language training for immigrants. But when asked about such assistance for unauthorized (or illegal) immigrants, they were more likely to say that the assistance is unimportant. In particular, most New Yorkers considered local assistance to help unauthorized immigrants find affordable housing to be unimportant. Fewer New Yorkers considered it important for their city or town to provide English language training for unauthorized immigrants, but still a majority of respondents considered such assistance to be very or somewhat important.

**Figure 2:** Support of Local Assistance for Immigrants, New York State, 2007 and 2008



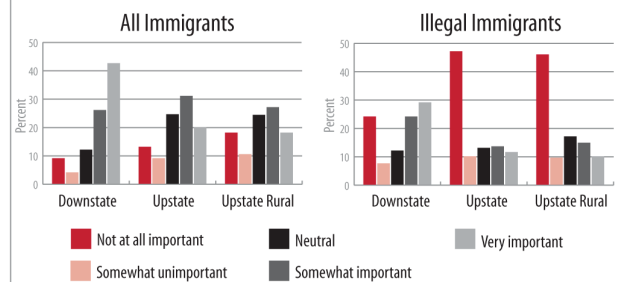
Source: Empire State Poll, Cornell University 2007, 2008

The findings for NYS are highly influenced by the New York City (NYC) metropolitan area where 37 percent of the population is foreign born, and 3 out of 4 persons report that they personally know an immigrant that they are not related to. This contrasts significantly with Upstate New York where only about 5 percent of the population is foreign born, and only about half of survey respondents report personally knowing an immigrant. Upstate respondents are much less likely to think that their city or town should assist immigrants, although more people think that such assistance is important than think it is unimportant (Empire State Poll 2008; Fiscal Policy Institute 2007). However, the majority of respondents living outside the NYC metropolitan area feel it is unimportant for their city or town to provide affordable housing for *unauthorized* immigrants (see Figure 3), and almost half think that it is unimportant for their city or town to provide English language training to *unauthorized* immigrants (see Figure 4). Survey respondents living outside the NYC metropolitan area appear to be divided about how important it is for their city or town to provide English language training to unauthorized immigrants.

### What Should Be Done?

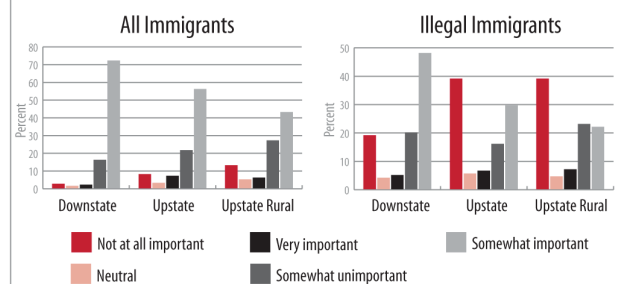
Community efforts to promote language and certain types of technical training can play an important part in furthering the social and economic integration of immigrants into the community. English language proficiency helps immigrants to be more self-reliant, and this ability is especially important in the context of federal, state and local legislation that limits immigrants', especially unauthorized immigrants, access to public services. Our research in upstate New York indicates that most immigrants and other community residents

**Figure 3:** Support for Local Housing Assistance for Immigrants, Downstate, Upstate and Rural New York State, 2008



Source: Empire State Poll, Cornell University 2008

**Figure 4:** Support for Local English Language Training for Immigrants, Downstate, Upstate, and Rural New York State, 2008



Source: Empire State Poll, Cornell University 2008

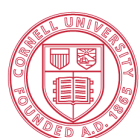
lack ongoing interactions with one another. Interactions not only improve other community residents' understanding of immigrants, they also help immigrants become integrated into the social and economic life of the community in some material ways such as the purchase of a car or home (Pfeffer and Parra 2005). Immigrants benefit materially from social ties to non-immigrant residents, and English language proficiency is a cornerstone in the formation of such ties.

### What Can Be Done?

English language ability is clearly related to immigrant self-reliance and success. Programs that provide English language training can play a critical role in helping immigrants become integrated into the social and economic life of communities. Indeed, the wave of local ordinances proposed in recent years has called for immigrants to speak English, and our assessment of public opinion in NYS indicates that there is fairly strong support for local programs providing English language training. Assuming that immigrants are more likely to make positive contributions in these communities if they are self-reliant, providing English language training seems logical.

Many churches already provide English language training programs, and various schools and colleges offer English as a second language classes. Workers sometimes find it difficult to attend classes due to work-related time constraints and expense. Employers can play an active role in adjusting work schedules and providing other forms of support (e.g. transportation, tuition, etc.) to facilitate immigrant English language training.

\* Based on a paper prepared for the conference on Immigration Reform: Implications for Farmers, Farm Workers, and Communities Washington, D.C. May 9, 2008. The full paper, along with references, is available on the CaRDI website with this publication.



# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 10/OCTOBER 2007

## Driver's Licenses for Undocumented Immigrants: Policy Considerations for New York State

By **Mary Jo Dudley\*** and **Robin Blakely**, Cornell University

### What is the issue?

On September 21, Governor Spitzer announced that New York State will become the eighth state to provide access to driver's licenses to undocumented immigrants. This issue has generated a significant amount of controversy. The Spitzer administration cited public safety (the DMV estimates that tens of thousands of unlicensed and uninsured drivers are currently on New York's roads), and lower auto insurance rates for all drivers as two key reasons for this measure. Those opposed to the Governor's actions cite concerns about national security – a state driver's license provides undocumented individuals an official form of identification, as well as granting privileges to persons who have entered the country illegally.

### How do immigrant farmworkers feel about this issue?

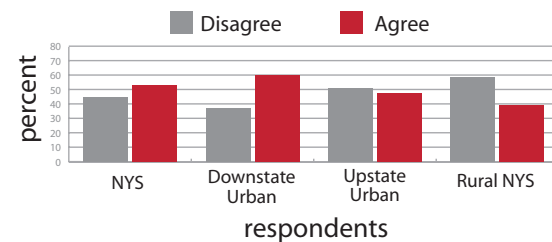
The driver's license issue is particularly important to immigrant farmworkers in NYS who live in rural areas and often lack access to transportation. It is estimated that there are between 50,000 and 80,000 farmworkers in NYS, many of whom are undocumented immigrants. As part of a larger research project, the Cornell Farmworker Program conducted a series of interviews with immigrant farmworkers about access to driver's licenses in NYS. Immigrant farmworkers felt that having a driver's license would allow individuals to more fully participate in community life, access needed goods and services, and avoid the negative effects of social isolation. Unlicensed workers must often rely heavily on employers or friends for transportation, arrangements which are often inconsistent and unreliable.

### How do New Yorkers feel about this issue?

To gain a deeper understanding of how New Yorkers feel about this issue, the Cornell Farmworker Program added a question on the 2007 Empire State Poll where respondents were read the following statement and question: "Currently, undocumented immigrants are not allowed to apply for a driver's license in New York State. As an alternative, some states offer an "immigrant driving document" for undocumented immigrants which requires them to pass a written and road test. Do you think that undocumented immigrants in NYS should be allowed to apply for a similar immigrant driving document?" New Yorkers differ significantly in how they feel about this issue, depending on what part of the state they live in (see Figure 1).

A slight majority of New Yorkers (53%) were in favor of allowing undocumented immigrants the opportunity to apply for a document similar to a driver's license, while 44% were opposed. Downstate urban respondents were the most supportive, while rural New Yorkers were the least supportive (60% to 38%, respectively). Upstate urban respondents fell in the middle, with approximately 48% agreeing with the idea. It is interesting to note that while access to transportation is a significant issue in rural areas across the state, rural New Yorkers were much more likely to oppose granting undocumented immigrants access to licenses. This finding may reflect the difference

**Figure 1:** Should undocumented immigrants in NYS be allowed to apply for a document similar to a driver's license?



Source: February 2007 Empire State Poll & Rural Survey, Survey Research Institute, Cornell Farmworker Program, & CaRDI, Cornell University.

\*numbers do not add to 100% because of a "do not know" response not shown here.

in rural New Yorker's views about immigrants and immigration in general, rather than simply the issue of driver's licenses. Rural New Yorkers may also see immigration as an exclusively urban issue, not realizing that undocumented immigrants also settle in rural areas.

### What are some of the policy implications?

Those who support providing undocumented immigrants access to licenses suggest that such measures increase public safety. Most immigrants who have received licenses through immigrant licensing programs in other states have purchased and maintained auto insurance policies, and have passed a road test and an eye examination. Licenses would ensure that immigrants who drive would do so legally and safely—a benefit to all New York State residents. Those in opposition to such measures point to concerns about domestic security issues, as well as their unease in granting privileges (versus rights) to individuals who have entered the country illegally.

Starting in December 2007, the NYS Department of Motor Vehicles will accept a current foreign passport as proof of identity. The administration argued that this change will increase public safety, lower insurance rates for all drivers, increase security, and strengthen the "one driver/one license" rule. The Governor has delayed a decision regarding New York's compliance with the Real ID Act of 2005, federal legislation which mandates a federal drivers license. Critics of this act suggest that it will create a two-tier system which would identify immigrants. However, rejecting the Real ID Act may potentially cause New York licenses to no longer be valid forms of federal identification. The dialogue around providing access to driver's licenses for undocumented immigrants at both the state and federal level will likely continue in the public policy arena for some time. ♦

\*Director, Cornell Farmworker Program (CFP) - For more information on the CFP, please visit <http://devsoc.cals.cornell.edu/cals/devsoc/outreach/cfp/index.cfm>





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# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 8/AUGUST 2007

## New Yorkers are more optimistic about their personal finances than the State's economic future

By **Robin M. Blakely**, Cornell University

While almost one in three New Yorkers expect the state's economy to worsen over the next year, far fewer expect that their personal financial situation will deteriorate during this time. People's perceptions vary, however, depending on where one lives in the state.

We asked 1,100 respondents to Cornell University's 2007 Empire State Poll and CaRDI's Rural Survey whether they expected the NYS economy as a whole to improve, stay the same, or worsen over the next 12 months. As might be expected, downstate urban respondents were the most optimistic about the state's economy, with 38% believing it would improve. Downstate New York as a whole has been largely buffered from Upstate New York's economic woes in the last decade or more. Although poverty and economic hardship still plague parts of New York City, the metropolitan area has had impressive economic gains in financial services bringing significant rewards to the region.

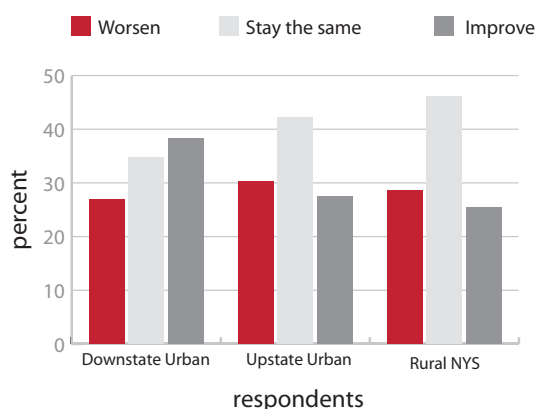
In contrast to NYC, more upstate urban New Yorkers were pessimistic about the state's economic future, with 30% fearing that the state's economy would worsen over the next year, and only 28% ex-

pecting it to improve (compared to 38% for their downstate counterparts). Rural New Yorkers were slightly less pessimistic than their urban counterparts, but a large majority expects the state's economic fortunes to worsen or stay the same.

When asked about respondents' personal financial situations, responses again vary by geographic location. Over 44% of downstate urban respondents expect their personal finances to improve and only 11% felt they would be financially worse off in a year. By contrast, only 31% of rural New Yorkers believed they would experience an improvement in their personal financial situation, while 15% felt they would be worse off a year from now. Upstate urban respondents were somewhere in the middle, with about 36% expecting their personal financial situation to improve and about 13% expecting it to worsen.

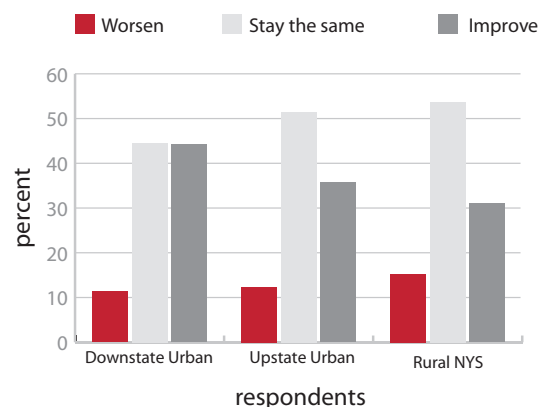
Regardless of where New Yorkers live in the state, respondents to our survey believe that their personal financial situation will fare better than the state economy as a whole over the next year. A challenge will be to channel this sense of personal optimism into greater economic growth and development across the state. ♦

**Figure 1:** Do you expect the NYS economy as a whole to worsen, stay the same, or improve over the next year?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll and Rural Survey, Cornell University.

**Figure 2:** Do you expect your own *personal financial situation* to be worsen, stay about the same, or improve over the next year?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll and Rural Survey, Cornell University.



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# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 4/APRIL 2007

## New York State Consumers Express Strong Interest in Local Food

By **Duncan Hildey** & **Joe Francis**, Cornell University

The March 2, 2007 cover of TIME magazine boldly proclaimed “Forget Organic. Buy Local,” suggesting that after weighing the issues of freshness, taste, pesticides used, and the distance produce travels, the balance may tip for some consumers in favor of seasonally-available *local* fruits and vegetables (both organic and conventional) over organics produced on an industrial scale in far away places.

All this attention to local food is music to the ears of farmers in New York State and beyond who hope to tap this new wave of enthusiasm for local, fresh farm products. In addition, this may prove to be a significant local economic development opportunity.

Are New Yorkers’ interested in buying local food? Yes, according to over three quarters of the respondents of the 2004 Empire State Poll, an annual opinion survey of NYS residents. Researchers at Cornell University, working with the New York State Farmers’ Direct Marketing Association, included questions on local food buying habits and preferences on the poll. They found that over three-quarters of respondents expressed a preference for local food, with a little over a third reporting that they will go out of their way to buy local food. Only about a fifth of respondents stated that local food was not important to them (see Figure 1).

When respondents were asked what factors would increase their purchases of local food, more than one in four responded

**Table 1:** What Would Encourage Your Purchase of Locally Produced Food?

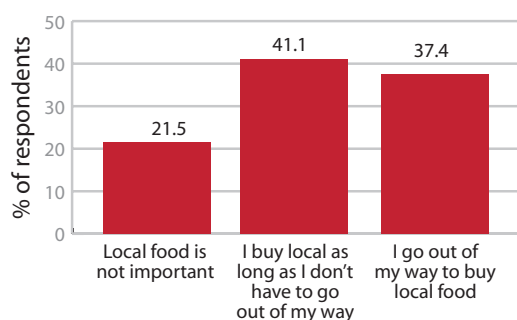
Response	#	%
Greater Convenience/Availability/Accessibility	214	28%
Competitive Pricing/Affordable	124	16%
Combination of Factors	103	13%
Good Quality/Freshness/Taste	82	11%
Knowing I’m Helping Economy/Community/Farmer	71	9%
Unknown/Don’t Know/Nothing/ Doesn’t Matter	49	6%
Knowing It Is Organic	42	5%
Marketing/Labeling	30	4%
Health-related Factors	23	3%
Motivated Already	20	3%
Selection	12	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>770</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Hildey & Francis, Empire State Poll, Cornell University, 2004.

that greater convenience, availability, and accessibility were key factors. Less important, but still influential, were price, quality, and contributing to the local economy/supporting a local producer (see Table 1).

Based on these findings, New Yorkers *are* interested in local food and would buy more if it were available in places they already shop. Several supermarket chains in New York State have been promoting “homegrown” fruits and vegetables in the produce section for a number of years. If consumer interest in local foods continues to grow, these supermarkets could be further encouraged to increase wholesale purchases from larger scaled farmers (producer-shippers) in NYS. Paradoxically, this might negatively affect smaller local roadside stands, pick-your-own operators and farmers’ market vendors who find themselves in the trade area of a large supermarket offering “homegrown” produce. However, the 37.4% of New Yorkers who go out of their way for local food are likely to continue to buy directly from farmers (including organic and conventionally produced fruits and vegetables, dairy products, meats, wines and cheeses). Farmers’ markets continue to grow and thrive around NYS. The larger, middle group of consumers — who like local food but want it to be more convenient to purchase — will benefit from local products offered through major retailers. ♦

**Figure 1:** NY Residents’ Propensity to Buy Local Food



Source: Hildey & Francis, Empire State Poll, Cornell University, 2004.



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# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 16/APRIL 2008

## The Impact of Agriculture: It's More Than Economic (Part I)\*

By Duncan L. Hilchey, Gilbert W. Gillespie Jr., David L. Kay, and R. David Smith, Cornell University

There is growing evidence of agriculture's positive impacts on rural economies. Indicators such as income and employment multipliers help Extension staff, planners and economic developers make the case for protecting agriculture and for promoting agricultural economic development. However, the non-economic benefits of agriculture for local communities, including recreational access, aesthetically-pleasing green space in the countryside, and quality of life for residents have received comparatively little attention. Increased awareness of these benefits may help local leaders more fully understand the importance of local agriculture, and develop and successfully implement policies and strategies for sustaining agriculture in communities.

### Feedback from focus groups

We facilitated a series of focus groups<sup>1</sup> to gauge public and agriculture-industry understandings of a range of possible non-economic benefits that agriculture provides to local communities. We conducted three focus groups in one of each of the following types of counties: rural; rapidly suburbanizing; and dominated by a metropolitan area, for a total of nine focus group meetings.

More than 50 people participated. One focus group in each county was composed of a random sample of adults without ties to agriculture. Another group was composed of farmers, businesspeople, and local farm agency staff nominated by local Cornell Cooperative Extension staff members to represent agriculture and related organizations in their respective counties. The third group was composed of a mix of people from these two categories. We began each focus group by asking participants the following questions: "From your own perspective, is having agriculture in your community important to you? For what reasons?" We specifically told participants that we were interested in more than just the economic reasons, and asked the participants to post all of their comments under the headings of "social/cultural," "environmental," and "economic." We then discussed what these comments meant to the participants. The nine focus groups yielded 338 individual statements on the importance of local agriculture. These were later coded into the benefit themes shown in Table 1.

### What are the perceived benefits of local agriculture?

The stated non-economic benefits of agriculture were wide-ranging, including preserving open space (for wildlife and bucolic views), providing a buffer to development, providing a local source of fresh food, and preserving a highly valued heritage and its traditions. The most frequent comments fell under the subtheme "provides aesthetic benefits and open space" and the subtheme "contributes to quality of life in the community."

<sup>1</sup>A focus group is a qualitative research method which includes posing a research question or questions to a selected group of participants and then guiding them through a moderated discussion to gather in-depth insights about the topic.

**Table 1:** What are the reasons having agriculture in your community is important to you?

Focus Group Responses Categorized by Theme and Subthemes

Benefit Theme Category	Percent
<b>Social/Cultural (143 Comments)</b>	
Provides high-quality & local food	29%
Contributes to community & quality of life	25%
Maintains important heritage/tradition/work ethic	22%
Promotes public awareness of importance of agriculture	17%
Contributes to local food security and safety	7%
	100%
<b>Environmental (94 Comments)</b>	
Provides aesthetic benefits & open space	60%
Agriculture is consistent with environmental ethic & wildfire	31%
Agriculture is a clean industry	10%
	100%
<b>Economic (71 Comments)</b>	
Provides employment	41%
Supports economy (including local)	38%
Provides tourism benefits & opportunities	13%
Contributes taxes & public services	8%
	100%
<b>Other/uninterpretable/adverse impacts (30 Comments)</b>	
<b>Total Comments</b>	<b>338</b>

Table 1. Note: The emphasis in the focus groups was on identifying the different impacts of agriculture. We specified that we were interested in more than just the economic impacts. This table reflects the diversity of the responses in the respective categories and does not indicate any ranking of importance.

In the focus group discussion, many participants, especially those without ties to agriculture, tended to differentiate the impacts of agriculture by farm size and articulate the environmental and social contributions of small- and medium-scale agriculture. A significant proportion of participants expressed willingness to support family farms near where they live, through a variety of public policy initiatives such as buy local campaigns, public education, and farmland protection. Moreover, language used by the focus group participants reflects the complexity of attitudes and values people have regarding farming (corporate vs. non-corporate; family vs. non-family; large vs small; organic vs. conventional; local vs. non-local; industrial vs. craft). Non-farm participants tended not to favor farm enterprises they perceived to be large and "industrial," which they characterized as having negative environmental and social impacts. Those with this view tended to be interested in seeing public policies which support "family farms."

Our focus group results suggest that people in New York hold diverse views on agriculture, think that agriculture has many economic, social and environmental benefits, and that agriculture in New York can benefit from a large reservoir of support among the non-farming population. ▲

\*Part II (Issue 17/May 2008) will highlight data from the Empire State Poll on this issue.



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# rural new york minute

ISSUE NUMBER 17/MAY 2008

## The Impact of Agriculture: It's More Than Economic (Part II)\*

By Gilbert W. Gillespie Jr., Duncan L. Hilchey, David L. Kay, and R. David Smith, Cornell University

The character of farming in New York State has evolved, and the number of residents deriving their livelihoods directly from agriculture has declined to a small fraction of the population. However, our survey data suggests almost unanimous agreement among upstate New York residents that agriculture is important in the state, with more than half of respondents choosing reasons other than economic ones.

In last month's Rural New York Minute (Issue 16/April 2008) we discussed the non-economic benefits of agriculture for local communities identified by participants in a series of nine focus groups held in three counties in NYS. The focus groups were designed to gauge public and agriculture-industry understandings of a range of possible non-economic benefits that agriculture provides to local communities. Our results suggested that people in New York hold diverse views on agriculture and believe that agriculture has many economic, social and environmental benefits. In this month's issue we report on data gathered from upstate New York State residents in the 2004 Empire State Poll in which we examined their opinions on the importance of NYS agriculture, and why agriculture might be important to them.

We included two questions in two surveys of New York State residents conducted by Cornell University's Survey Research Institute. The first survey was answered by 420 randomly selected respondents from the upstate population. The second survey was answered by 200 rural residents. The second survey was commissioned by the Community and Rural Development Institute (CaRDI) to compare rural residents' opinions with those of upstate residents in general.

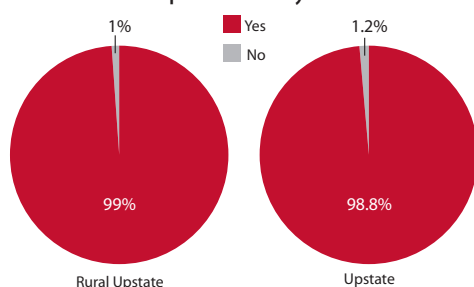
The survey participants were asked "Do you feel having agriculture in New York State is important today?" The virtually unanimous response, for both upstate residents and rural residents specifically, was "yes" (see Figure 1). One hundred ninety seven of the 199 rural participants who answered the question said "yes" as did 395 of the 400 upstate participants. Only one participant in each of the surveys

said they "didn't know." This finding is consistent with the results of our focus groups reported in last month's issue.

Survey participants were then given a list of possible reasons why having agriculture in the state might be important to them. Then they were asked to choose which of these they thought was most important. The most frequently selected reason was that agriculture contributes to the economy, chosen by 43% of the 193 rural participants and 37% of the 392 upstate participants who answered the question (see Figure 2). Nearly 20% of participants in both surveys identified agriculture's role in providing a secure food supply as their most important reason, followed by the provision of fresh food.

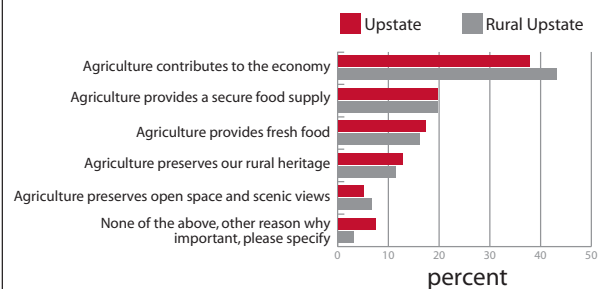
Smaller proportions of participants chose preservation of open space and rural heritage as their primary reasons that agriculture in NYS is important. These findings might appear to differ from the focus group findings, but the differences are most likely due to asking Empire State Poll survey participants to limit their response to one reason, whereas focus group participants offered an average of about six reasons each. Nevertheless, while open space and rural heritage issues may be important as indicated by the focus groups, topics related to food and economy hold center stage in upstate residents' perceptions of the importance of agriculture.

**Figure 1: Do you feel having agriculture in New York State is important today?**



Source: 2004 Empire State Poll

**Figure 2: The most important reason why having agriculture in the state might be important to you**



Source: 2004 Empire State Poll

Even though the economic impacts of agriculture tend to be the first to come to many people's minds, about half of the respondents chose one of the non-economic effects as being the most important. Identifying and bringing these non-economic considerations into discussions of issues along with the economic considerations may be important for mobilizing support of local agriculture. ▲

\* Please see Issue 16/April 2008 for Part I of this 2-part series. A selected bibliography for this issue is also available on the CaRDI website.



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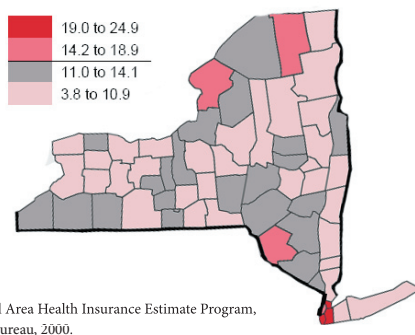
ISSUE NUMBER 5/MAY 2007

## Health Care Access in Rural NY: It's not just about having health insurance

By Robin M. Blakely & Kosali I. Simon, Cornell University

Having affordable and accessible health care is an issue that most people consider critical in influencing their overall well-being and quality of life.<sup>1</sup> In 2000, about 14% of New York State residents had no health insurance coverage.<sup>2</sup> At the county level, this ranges from a low of 6.9% in Saratoga County, to a high of 22.4% in Bronx County (see Figure 1). Since 2000, the percent uninsured has remained fairly stable at the state-level, and is estimated to be 13.5% by the latest data available for 2005.<sup>3</sup>

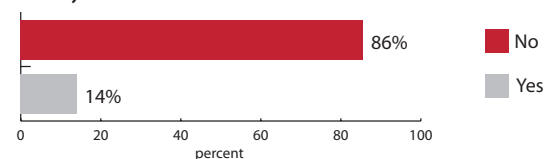
**Figure 1:** Percent without health insurance coverage by county (NYS average = 14%)



However, in rural areas of New York State, even those individuals with health insurance coverage may face limited options for accessing health care services due to the lack of specialists, adequate clinics and hospitals, or doctors who accept Medicare or Medicaid.

In the 2007 Empire State Poll, an annual survey conducted by Cornell University, rural New Yorkers over the age of 18 were asked about their health care coverage and access. While having some type of health insurance usually allows most people to seek physician care when they need to at fairly low co-pays, 14% of those surveyed indicated that in the past 12 months there had been at least one occasion when they had needed to see a doctor but couldn't.

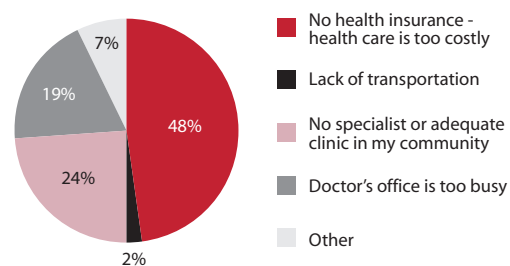
**Figure 2:** In the past 12 months, was there an occasion when you needed to see a doctor but could not?



Source: Empire State Poll, Rural Survey, 2007.

While 48% of respondents reported that lack of health insurance kept them from seeing a doctor when they needed to, other factors were also important. Other reasons, such as the lack of a local specialist or adequate clinic or hospital and local doctor's offices being overwhelmed with patients, accounted for 43% of respondents not able to see a doctor when they needed to.

**Figure 3:** Why could you not see a doctor?



Source: Empire State Poll, Rural Survey, 2007

Health insurance coverage, or lack thereof, continues to be a pressing matter for a large percentage of New York State residents. In rural areas of the state, however, the *availability* of adequate, quality care clearly continues to present another set of challenges. Initiatives such as the expansion of rural health networks, developing statewide health care coverage, increasing high-speed internet access, addressing service reimbursement issues for rural providers, etc., are among several of the identified priorities that emerged from the Rural Health section of the Rural Vision Project, a collaborative effort between Cornell University and the NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources (NYS LCRR). (For more information on the Rural Vision Project, see <http://hosts.cce.cornell.edu/rnyi/>.) ♦

<sup>1</sup> In a CBS News/New York Times poll, February 23-February 27, 2007

<sup>2</sup> Small Area Health Insurance Estimates Program, U.S. Census Bureau, 2000.

<sup>3</sup> DeNavas-Walt C, Proctor BD, and Lee CH. U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, P60-231, Income, Poverty, and Health Insurance Coverage in the United States: 2005, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, DC, 2006.





# Research & Policy Brief Series

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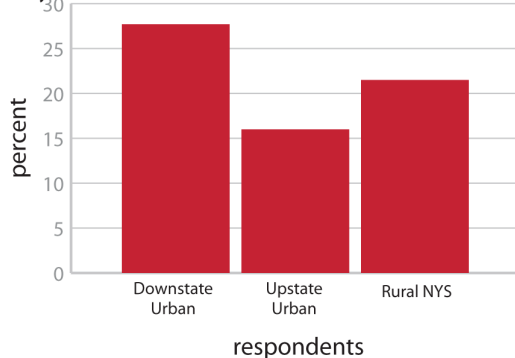
## School-Based Health Centers in NYS

By John W. Sipple and Hope Casto, Cornell University.

### What is the Issue?

A significant number of New Yorkers are dissatisfied with the health care available to children in their communities. According to the 2007 Empire State Poll, an annual opinion survey of New York State residents conducted by Cornell University, this opinion is felt most strongly among respondents living in downstate urban areas (28%), followed by respondents in rural areas (22%), and upstate urban areas (16%) (See Figure 1). Although this is not a majority opinion, it does represent a sizeable population who perceive that children's health-care needs are not being adequately met in New York State.

**Figure 1:** Levels of dissatisfaction with the primary health-care services/opportunities available to children in the community.



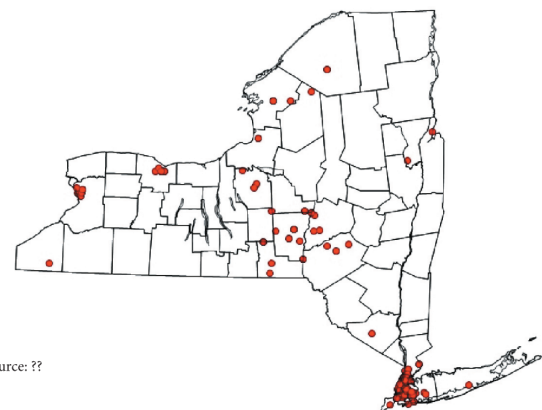
Source: John Sipple, 2007 Empire State Poll.

Nationally, issues of poverty and inadequate health insurance plague many rural children. According to the 2005 American Community Survey, 23% of rural children live in poverty. Furthermore, a recent study by

the Carsey Institute (UNH) found that 1.3 million rural children are uninsured, with the highest percentage of uninsured in the most rural areas. School-base health centers are well situated to serve poor and uninsured children in rural areas. SBHCs may also be a more efficient way to serve rural children regardless of their poverty status.

### What are SBHCs and how do they work in schools?

**Map 1:** School-Based Health Centers in New York State.



Source: ??

Currently in New York State, there are 197 approved, operating SBHCs, the most of any state in the U.S. as of the 2004-2005 school year. The majority of these are in urban areas (New York City and upstate urban areas), while 27 are located in rural areas (see Map 1).

School-based health centers (SBHC), by definition and regulation, differ from state to state across the Unit-

ed States. In NYS, SBHCs are defined by the NYS Department of Health as “a licensed school-based health, dental, or mental health clinic [that] is located in a school facility of a school district or BOCES and [that] is operated by an entity other than the district or BOCES, and will provide health, dental, and mental health services during school hours and/or non-school hours to school-age and pre-school children.” SBHCs in NYS offer services to children enrolled in the school, including age appropriate reproductive health care, and offer not only on-site access during the school day but also 24 hour on-call coverage.

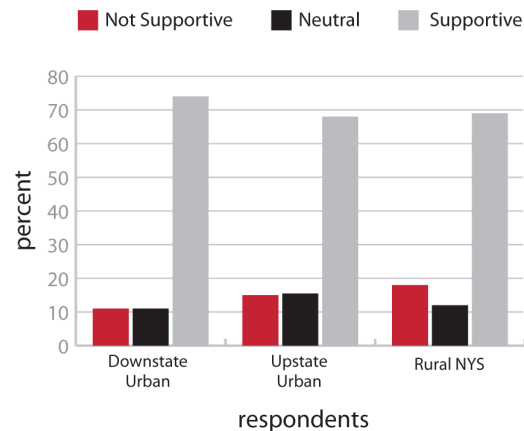
In order to house a SBHC, schools must collaborate with a sponsoring health care agency. The sponsoring agency bears the financial and legal liability, and hence motivates the efficient enrollment of all eligible children in health care benefit programs (i.e., Child Health Plus). The gains in efficiency may also be realized by not requiring students to leave the school building for routine health care, which in turn reduces time out of the classroom for students and travel obligations for parents. The existence of a SBHC may have added significance in rural settings where many communities do not have health clinics or physicians.

### Do New Yorkers support SBHCs? Do they have concerns?

Respondents to the 2007 Empire State Poll were asked to indicate their level of support for school-based health clinics for the children in their community. Strong levels of support were shown across the state (downstate urban areas with 76% support, upstate urban areas with 68% support, and 69% of respondents in rural areas indicating support for SBHCs) (see Figure 2). In fact, what is striking about these numbers is the almost complete lack of variation in levels of support among respondents living in different areas of the state.

When rural survey respondents were asked about their primary concerns about school-based health centers, some respondents cited such issues as additional costs (even though, per NYS regulation, the cost of the centers is born by the sponsoring health care provider), privacy, and whether it was the job of the school to house a SBHC. However, a third of the rural population surveyed responded that they had no concerns, regardless of whether or not they support clinics.

**Figure 2:** If primary health-care services were available in a clinic inside your local public school, would you support the use of it for children in your community?



Source: John Sipple, 2007 Empire State Poll.

### What is the future of school-based health centers in NYS?

The number of SBHCs in New York State continues to increase. Bassett Hospital opened three additional SBHCs in 2006/7, operating a total of nine centers in the state. Providing further support to SBHCs is the introduction in the U.S. Congress of the *School-Based Health Clinic Establishment Act of 2007*. This Act would authorize \$50 million to create new SBHCs and fund existing centers across the country in 2008. Congress is now requesting an increase of \$10 billion over the next five years to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (e.g. Child Health Plus in NYS). Such an increase would allow greater numbers of children of the working poor access to health insurance. This would lower costs for sponsoring health care agencies operating SBHCs by reducing the numbers of uninsured children being served. SBHCs offer yet another piece of the health care puzzle, a solution that can potentially serve more school-age children efficiently in their home communities.

### Key Resources

#### NYS Department of Health:

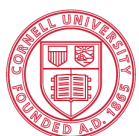
[www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/school/index.htm](http://www.nyhealth.gov/nysdoh/school/index.htm)

#### National Assembly of School-Based Health Centers:

[www.NASBHC.org](http://www.NASBHC.org)

#### The Center for Health and Health Care in Schools:

[www.HealthInSchools.org](http://www.HealthInSchools.org)



Cornell University

# Research & Policy Brief Series

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## Heats and Animosities: What Rural New Yorkers Think about Local Taxes and Services

By **David L. Kay**, Cornell University.

*"Taxes, after all, are dues that we pay for the privileges of membership in an organized society." Franklin D. Roosevelt*  
*"Collecting more taxes than is absolutely necessary is legalized robbery." Calvin Coolidge*

### What is the Issue?

Local taxes have been of great interest to New Yorkers since at least 1683. In that year the Colonial Assembly passed an innovative "Act for the Defraying of the publique & necessary Charge of each respective Citty, Towne, and County throughout this Province & for maintaining the poore & preventing vagabonds". By 1697, this legislation had been partially repealed because, "the Act hath been by Experience found to be very inconvenient and burthensome to the Inhabitants of this Province, and hath occasioned many heats, animosities, Strifes and Debates..."

In 2007, the "heat" goes on. According to CaRDI's Rural Survey of the Empire State Poll (ESP), an annual survey of NYS residents conducted by Cornell University, one quarter of rural New Yorkers identified taxation as the most important issue facing their communities. Of these, almost half directed their concern at "local", and more specifically "property", taxes. Scathing editorials about high local taxes are routine. It is widely acknowledged that in NYS, property taxes are, by some measures, the highest in the nation.

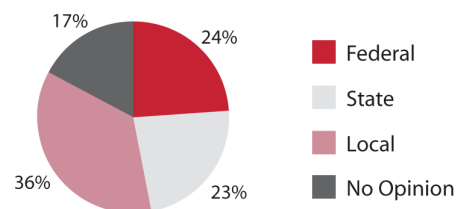
As noted on an IRS website, "When it comes to taxes, everyone has an opinion." However, the all too common focus on taxes alone ignores the public services for which taxes pay. What does the public actually feel about the *balance* of costs and benefits? Using the ESP, we explore the opinions held by rural New Yorkers about their taxes weighed against the public services the taxes enable. We focus in particular on the increasing, and increasingly controversial, burden of *local* taxes. The public's mix of opinion is more nuanced than politicians and newspaper editors often presume.\*

### Which level of government provides the most value?

We asked residents in rural New York State "from which level of government do you feel you get the most for your money: federal, state, or local?" Although the unpopular

local property tax is considered by more than half of New Yorkers to be the "least fair" of all major government taxes, it is also true that a plurality of people feel they get the "most for their money" from local rather than state or federal government (see Figure 1). In rural New York, more than a third of respondents (36%) cited local government in this context. This contrasts with the roughly one quarter of respondents who picked the federal (24%) or state (23%) governments, and the 17% who expressed no opinion on the issue.

**Figure 1:** From which level of local government do you get the most for your money?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Rural Survey (CaRDI, Cornell University)

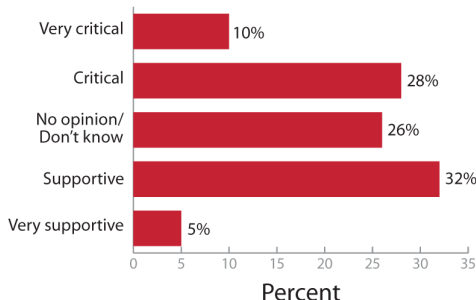
The distaste for the property tax and the comparatively good marks accorded local government are not necessarily contradictory. Two obvious reasons are that 1) local governments have increasingly turned to alternative revenue sources like the sales tax, and 2) many taxpayers know that the greatest part of the property tax burden they carry is levied by school districts rather than towns, villages, counties or even cities.



## How critical are rural New Yorkers of their local government?

We also asked respondents “how would you describe your own opinion regarding your local government’s mix of taxes and services?” According to 2007 ESP results, rural New Yorkers are evenly divided in their opinions of the efforts of their local government to balance taxes and services. As shown in Figure 2, while 38% are critical or very critical, 37% are supportive or very supportive. Just 15% express strong opinions one way or another (very supportive or very critical).

**Figure 2:** How would you describe your own opinion regarding your local government’s mix of taxes and services?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Rural Survey (CaRDI, Cornell University)

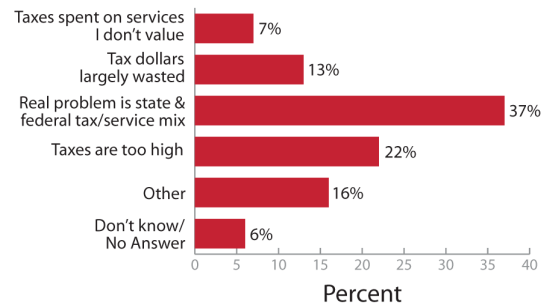
## What are the criticisms of local government’s mix of taxes and services?

Why might some rural respondents be disaffected with their local government’s mix of taxes and services? Just about one fifth (22%) gave the common headline answer: “My local government taxes are too high, regardless of the services provided”, while another 13% focused on “waste” in spending (see Figure 3). Even when prompted for reasons the respondent might be “at all critical” about local government taxes and services, the largest group, however, was the 37% who agreed that, “Local taxes and services are not the problem, it’s really the mix of federal and state taxes and services.” Moreover, within the 16% who fell into the “other” category, the largest subgroup stated that they were simply “not critical.” Taken together, these results underscore the reluctance of a surprisingly large segment of rural New Yorkers to focus criticism on local government taxes and services.

## What are the Policy Implications?

Politicians continue to debate the extent to which varied factors, including state and federal government policies,

**Figure 3:** Why are you critical of your local government’s mix of taxes and services?



Source: 2007 Empire State Poll, Rural Survey (CaRDI, Cornell University)

are to be blamed for high local taxes. However, a consensus has developed about the need for tax relief. The State offers a variety of tax reductions for property owners.\*\* The STAR property tax relief program, while disparaged by many analysts, is nonetheless politically popular. A Spitzer Administration commission has been recently created to address taxpayer burdens associated with “duplicative services”, though it views the problem primarily through the lens of only one theory of the reason for high taxes: “The sheer number of taxing jurisdictions has led to a significant degree of overlap in public services, which has had a devastating affect on local tax burdens.”\*\*\*

Our survey results underscore the complexity of rural public opinion about this tangle of issues. Local government is more widely seen as providing the “most for your money” compared to state or federal government, but the bedrock of local funding, property taxes, are seen by many to be too high and unfair. Rural residents are divided over the extent to which they are supportive of, indifferent to, or critical of their own local government’s mix of services and taxes. While a substantial number of rural residents feel that local taxes are too high, wasted or misspent, an even greater number sees no problem or directs their criticisms at higher levels of government. Efficiency gains aside, in the larger picture, services or political values cherished by important and perhaps even majority constituencies will probably have to be compromised if local taxes are to be significantly reduced. The question that has not been well addressed by researchers, politicians, or indeed the public is in some sense simple: what are we collectively willing to give up? ♦

\*Please check our website for an upcoming *CaRDI Report* where these findings are paired with related pieces about a) statewide and national trends in opinion about which specific kinds of taxes are considered least fair, and b) policy options for property tax reform in New York state.

\*\* see [http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property\\_tax\\_reduc\\_individual.shtml](http://www.nyc.gov/html/dof/html/property/property_tax_reduc_individual.shtml)

\*\*\* see more at <http://www.nyslocalgov.org/>

